



**HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE  
SCIENCES**

**REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT; THE  
INFLUENCE OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION ON TOURISM  
MANAGEMENT IN EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY.**

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PhD Dissertation

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of regional integration policies on tourism management within the East African Community (EAC), one of the Regional Economic Communities in the African Union and a prominent tourist destination. Despite tourism's significant economic contribution, integration policies have largely prioritized industrial growth, with tourism often addressed reactively rather than strategically. Adopting a phenomenological approach guided by a modified Crotty framework, the research draws on interviews, observations, case studies, and documentary analysis involving policymakers, tour operators, and cross-border tourists. The findings reveal that visa regimes, labor mobility, and transport connectivity are pivotal in shaping tourism flows and management outcomes. Current visa arrangements, including visa-on-arrival and e-visas, while offering partial facilitation, impose logistical and perceptual barriers that undermine visitor confidence. Border-crossing policies vary across partner states, with the Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda national ID travel arrangement demonstrating notable benefits for intra-regional tourism, yet such measures remain uneven compared to models like Europe's Schengen Area. Infrastructure integration is found to be central to tourism development, with improvements in road networks and the establishment of one-stop border posts yielding positive effects, while the absence of an integrated EAC air transport policy continues to constrain aviation's potential. Rail initiatives, particularly Kenya's Standard Gauge Railway, have enhanced accessibility and diversified tourism products, whereas inland waterways, notably Lake Victoria, remain underdeveloped as tourism assets despite historical trade importance and emerging cross-lake services. Trade integration under the EAC Common Market Protocol has facilitated cross-border labor mobility in countries that have abolished work permit requirements, enhancing workforce diversity and service provision. However, the lack of standardized qualification recognition and persistent regulatory restrictions, particularly in Tanzania, limit the full potential of labor and service integration. Political integration, envisioned through an EAC federation, offers potential benefits in stability, collective bargaining, and coordinated tourism strategies but also presents risks linked to governance complexities, economic asymmetries, and historical inter-state tensions. This study concludes that tourism can be a driver and beneficiary of deeper regional integration if supported by harmonized visa frameworks, mutually recognized qualifications, liberalized transport policies, and inclusive governance mechanisms that involve industry stakeholders. These measures could position the EAC as a competitive, culturally diverse, and sustainably managed tourism destination, while failure to address these structural gaps may perpetuate fragmentation and reduce the sector's contribution to regional development

## **DEDICATION**

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

**AfDB-** African Development Bank  
**AfCFTA-** African Continental Free Trade Area  
**AU-**African Union  
**AUC-** African Union Commission  
**ASEAN-** Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
**BASA-** Bilateral Air Service Agreement.  
**COMESA-** Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa  
**CU-** Customs Union  
**EAC-** East African Community  
**EACJ-** East African Court of Justice  
**EALA-** East African Legislative Assembly  
**ECA-** Economic Commission for Africa  
**ECLAC-**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
**EATP-**East African Tourism Platform  
**EU-**European Union  
**FDI-**Foreign Direct Investment  
**FTA-** Free Trade Area  
**IGAD-** Intergovernmental Authority on Development  
**KTA-** Kenya Transport Association  
**KBS-** Kenya Bureau of Statistics  
**OAU-** Organisation of African Union  
**REC-**Regional Economic Communities  
**RNC-** Rwanda National Congress  
**SADC-** Southern Africa Development Community  
**SAATM-** Single African Air Transport Market  
**SGR-** Standard Gauge Railway  
**TMEA-** Trademark East Africa

**TTA-** Tanzania Transport Association

**UNECA-** United Nation Economic Commission for Africa

**UNWTO-** United Nations World Tourism Organisation

**WTTC-** World Travel and Tourism Council

**WTO-** World Trade Organization

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# 1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study.

Regional integration goes through several stages. It starts with *Free Trade Area*, which is defined as a group of countries that have agreed to eliminate trade among themselves (Butorina & Borko, 2022). At this stage, the countries involved retain their tariffs and quotas to trade outside the free trade area. Countries can trade with each other freely, while having the freedom to set their trade policies with non-member countries. An ideal outcome is lower prices for goods and services, which leads to more affordable cost of travel for tourists. New investments would be stimulated by removing trade barriers and it would motivate a competitive tourism sector, which is beneficial for the tourists (Balassa, 2013). An example would be when country A and B agree to eliminate customs duties on each other, but they choose to impose charges on country C independently. This means that there is zero custom charges which would translate to possible lower holiday prices between country A and B, while country A can charge country C 10% and country B can charge country C 12%.

The next stage is a customs union, which is when two or more countries agree to remove tariffs and trade barriers on each other, and implement a common external trade policy. In the context of tourism, a customs union allows for rationalization of travel and tourism regulations, resulting in a more efficient tourism sector. Such an arrangement leads to a reduction in the cost and bureaucratic processes for both the tourists and the tourism businesses (R. J. Harrison, 2024). In this case, country A and B (free trade) do not charge any custom tariffs to each other, meanwhile they impose a common, e.g. 10%, tariff rate to third-party countries, such as country C.

Stage three would be the creation of a common market, which implies that there are no customs between countries A and B, but they have a further agreement to impose a common customs tariff for a third country like C which is not part of the customs union. A common market consists of four freedoms: free movement of capital, free movement of labor, freedom of goods and freedom of services such as transportation. A common market offers increased tourism flows within the region due to easier travel procedures, for example standardized visa regulations and improved transportation infrastructure (Quaglia & Verdun, 2024). Regions with free movement of goods and services tend to attract investment in tourism-related infrastructure and services, ultimately benefiting the tourism industry in the region. A common market also allows for harmonized standards and regulations, which improve the overall quality and safety of the tourism experience for visitors.

The Fourth stage of regional integration is the monetary union, and this comes with aligning of monetary policies and regulating them through a common central bank. For the tourism sector, the adoption of a common currency offers greater price stability by removing exchange rate

fluctuations. As a result, it becomes easier for tourists to budget and plan their expenses and offers savings from potential changes in exchange rates (Oyadeyi, 2024). In such circumstances, there would be a rise in tourist footfall because of a decrease in currency exchange uncertainty. A benefit of monetary union in regional integration is to provide both economic growth and stability, resulting in better infrastructure development and ultimately favourable tourism experience. However, one of the criticisms of a monetary union is that it leads to a loss of independent monetary policy by member states, and the susceptibility to economic shocks affecting the entire region (Bellifemine et al., 2025) .



Figure 1 Map of EAC Partner States.

## **Sustainability of Regional Integration and Tourism Management in the EAC**

Various studies have been conducted on the sustainability of regional integration arrangements in developing countries. Understanding what would make regional integration to succeed or fail is important for policymakers and researchers (Jegade, 2024). Mattli (1999) provided a conceptual model that operates on the premise of rational approach. According to him, regional integration relies on two conditions. One is that the private sector must demand for a greater integration, arising from the assumed potential for economic gains by extending market area within the region. This potential to gain is normally dynamic and may expand with new technologies, encouraging market players to lobby for regional institutional arrangements that facilitate the realization of these gains.

Second are the supply conditions relating to the political will to incorporate demands for regional institutions at each step of the integration process. Political leaders will normally support integration when it helps to improve domestic economic conditions, particularly during periods of economic difficulty. However, political will alone is not sufficient due to collective action problems, necessitating the need for a regional hegemony to coordinate rules, regulations, and policies (Mattli, 1999). Moreover, the creation of "commitment institutions" to monitor compliance with agreed policies may help the success of integration, despite being seen as less influential than private sector demand and hegemony. Mattli concludes that regions with private sector driven demand, a strong country to offer leadership, tend to enjoy successful integration, with "commitment institutions" serving as a facilitator in the process. Conversely, regional blocs that fail to meet these conditions are least likely to succeed in their integration efforts.

Mattli's model provides a good argument for understanding the determinants of good regional integration by highlighting the role between demand and supply conditions of the EAC private sector, as well as the significance of leadership or hegemony offered by Kenya, and commitment institutions. Commitment institutions in this case would be an EAC Commission empowered to execute agreed commitments, created to replace the current non-empowered Secretariat. The potential challenges with respect to Mattli's regional integration model focusing on the East African Community (EAC) have serious implications for the management of tourism within the region. The inequalities in the economies and infrastructure investments of the partner states could create a situation where tourism offerings are unevenly provided, preventing a balanced and equal tourism development in the region. For example, Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya has for a long time been the main gateway into the EAC, with many tourists who intend to visit Mt. Kilimanjaro and Serengeti in Tanzania frequently selecting it.

Political instability and governance issues in certain EAC member states also pose challenges to tourism management and promotion by eroding the perception of the region as a safe and stable tourist destination, discouraging international visitors. The Al-shabaab terrorist group in Somalia, an EAC Partner State, serves as an example. Therefore, the implications of the potential challenges

presented within the parameters of Mattli's regional integration model illustrate the complexity of promoting balanced and inclusive tourism development across the EAC region. The connection between regional integration and tourism, both within and beyond the region, is without any doubt. It is anticipated that regional integration will facilitate harmonization of tourism management and coordination of conservation policies (Yangailo & Mpundu, 2023). However, within the East African Community (EAC), Kenya and Tanzania have encountered a conflict regarding sport hunting; Kenya has maintained a strong anti-sport hunting position while Tanzania has maintained that it is an acceptable and necessary practice. In 1977, when wildlife populations were declining, Kenya banned trophy hunting, while Tanzania has continued to practice it as a source for revenue generation, and wildlife population control (Musika et al., 2022). The issue has been a sore point between the two countries, with major differences in approach to wildlife management.

Trophy hunters in Tanzania recently killed elephants believed to be part of a transboundary herd, generating widespread criticism. Reportedly, between September 2023 and February 2024, trophy hunters killed three elephants thought to belong to a transboundary group known as the super tuskers of Amboseli, which roams across Kenya and Tanzania. Targeting this group has been off-limits for decades (Poole et al., 2024). However, attempts to seek legal redress in the past have failed to stop sport hunting based on sovereignty arguments that Tanzania has the right to decide how to exploit resources within her borders

As a result, conservationists are urging the Tanzanian government to reinstate the trophy hunting ban and strengthen it with clearer regulations for land located within 40 km (25 miles) of the Kenyan border. In Tanzania, a license to hunt an elephant trophy costs \$10,000-\$20,000, with the proceeds divided between the government and local communities in conservation areas (Poole et al., 2024). The conservationists have clarified that they are not calling for a complete hunting ban in Tanzania but rather seeking to safeguard the majestic Kenyan tuskers that frequently roam across the border. They argue that the elephants targeted by hunters were some of the few with exceptionally large ivory tusks. This scenario is similar around the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem where Kenyans consider it unfair that they invest in conserving the animals, only for them to cross the border and get killed in Tanzania at a fee that only benefits Tanzania.

A part from that, Tanzania has been accused of blocking Kenyan tour operators at the Taveta, Namanga, Lunga Lungu, and Isbania borders. Kenyan operators say that they are forced to hire Tanzanian drivers and vans to take their clients into neighboring national parks, only to wait on the border for up to a week for their clients to come back. Meanwhile, Tanzanians managed to get into Kenya with no such restrictions. These inconsistencies raised questions considering that both countries had ratified the East African Common Market Protocol in 2010 (EAC, 2024b). Consequently, Kenya responded by prohibiting Tanzanian-registered tour vans from accessing Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and game parks in Kenya. The decision came after a three-week period requested by Tanzania for bilateral discussions to address the issue had passed without

a meeting. That development demonstrated the bottlenecks in cross-border tourism relations within the East African region (Philip Mwakio, 2013).

The withdrawal of approval for Kenya Airways to operate a passenger service to Tanzania in January 2024 had significant implications for tourism operations in the East African region. Tanzania civil aviation authority rescinded approval in response to Kenya's denial of cargo flight approvals for Air Tanzania reflected a growing trade dispute within the East African Community. Kenya Airways' daily flights to Dar Es Salam facilitate tourist travel between the two countries, and any disruptions to these services negatively impact tourism operations (Elias Biryabarema, 2024). Fortunately, the respective Civil Aviation Authorities were instructed by their governments to resolve the matter amicably within three days.

Elsewhere, disputes between Rwanda and Uganda led to the closure of their shared border in 2019. A key point of contention is the mutual accusations of espionage and support for rebel groups. Rwanda has accused Uganda of providing support to rebel groups such as the Rwanda National Congress (RNC) and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), both of which are against the Rwandan government. Rwanda has claimed that these groups operate from Ugandan territory with the knowledge and backing of Ugandan authorities (Hajarah Nalwadda, 2024). Uganda has countered those allegations with claims that Rwanda was sending spies into Uganda and that Rwandan intelligence operatives have been operating illegally within Uganda, aiming to destabilize the country (Kaiza A. K., 2019). These allegations have significantly strained the relations between the two neighboring countries, with dire consequences for the tourism sector.

The tensions between Rwanda and Burundi have led to the closure of their border (Republic of Rwanda, 2024) . This development was in the wake of accusations made by Burundi's president, Evariste Ndayishimiye, alleging that Rwanda is harboring and providing training to the Red Tabara rebel group (Krippahl & Kaledzi, 2024). The rebel group had claimed responsibility for an attack near Burundi's western border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwanda has denied these allegations. The closure of the border was communicated to the Rwandan government through media reports, which officials assert violates the principles of the regional bloc to which both countries belong. This situation reveals the growing tension with implications for regional tourism, stability and cooperation.

These cases demonstrate that the disagreements between countries in the East African Community have had a significant negative impact on tourism management in the region. From disputes over wildlife conservation methods and hunting practices to border closures and allegations of spying and support for rebles, these strained relations have created barriers for cross-border tourism and trade in the region. The closure of shared borders and the withdrawal of approvals for air travel services disrupt tourist travel, and this affects the tourism operations in the entire East African

region. Therefore, there is need for effective regional integration policies to promote regional tourism and economic growth.

In particular, these controversies pose several questions about whether the EAC trade integration, which enables free movement and trade, is applicable to tourism management. How will infrastructure integration benefit the region if tour operators cannot access all attractions within the East African Community (EAC)? How will political integration influence regional integration in the region? What are the possible solutions to these challenges?

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The history of regional integration in developing countries has historically concentrated on stimulating industrial development, and therefore, little is known about how it influences tourism management. The absence of comprehensive research in this area is worrying because of the major role that tourism plays in the economies of many developing nations and regional blocs. Especially in the case of the East African Community (EAC), there is a dearth of in-depth analysis regarding the relationship between regionalism and tourism management. This research studied the relationship between regional integration and tourism management from two perspectives. One was the influence of regional integration on tourism management. Two were the opportunities available to address tourism management within a regional framework.

The first perspective which focused on the influence of regional integration on tourism management, intended to explore specific gaps, including the reluctance of some EAC partner states in implementing the single East African Tourist Visa policy and the restrictions on tour van access to certain regions. It also studied infrastructure integration, trade integration, and political integration within the EAC and the challenges to effective tourism management. The second perspective aimed to look at the chances to improve tourism management in the EAC regional framework, and to identify potential solutions for making regional tourism management more efficient while pursuing regional integration objectives.

This study applied both perspectives to offer an integrated picture on how regional integration influences tourism management within the East African Community. By doing so, this research seeks to provide insights for policymakers, tourism professionals, and scholars on regional integration and tourism management.

*Table 1 objectives of the Study*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Tool</b>	<b>Execution</b>
1. To explore the influence of free movement protocol on tourism management in the EAC	Interviews, analytical observation at the one stop border posts, and prescriptive analysis of documents.	Analyzed interview scripts and the EAC documents (treaties, policies and reports)
2. To examine the influence of infrastructure integration on tourism management in the EAC	Interviews, analytical observation of modes of transport and prescriptive analysis of documents.	Analyzed the interview scripts and published reports, policy briefs, and articles about infrastructure integration in the EAC
3. To determine the influence of trade integration on tourism management in the EAC	Interviews and constructive argumentation based on documents.	Analyzed the interview scripts and published reports, policy briefs, and articles about trade integration in the EAC
4. To establish the influence of political integration on tourism management in the EAC	Interviews and philosophical critique	Analyzed the interview scripts and critiqued regional integration theories in and their application in the EAC
5. To explore the possible solutions for addressing tourism management within EAC regional integration frameworks.	Interviews, analytical observation at the one stop border posts, prescriptive and constructive argumentation analysis of documents.	Analyzed the interview scripts and published reports, policy briefs, and articles about trade integration in the EAC

**Source: Researcher 2024**

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. How does the free movement protocol influence tourism management in the EAC?
2. What is the influence of infrastructure integration on tourism management in the EAC?
3. How does trade integration influence tourism management in the EAC?
4. What will be the influence of political integration on tourism management in the EAC?
5. What are the possible solutions for addressing tourism management within EAC regional integration frameworks?

### **1.4 Assumptions of the Study**

1. All Partner States have fully implemented the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons within the East African Community (EAC).
2. Infrastructure integration within the EAC has been achieved to a level that facilitates regional connectivity.

3. The EAC Common Market Protocol is fully operational, providing an enabling framework for trade integration among Partner States.
4. The process of political integration within the EAC is actively underway, supported by institutional mechanisms and policy commitments

## **1.5 Structure of the Dissertation.**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter provides background of the study, the research problem, research objectives, research questions, and its significance.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter showcases past research on regional integration within the East African Community. It looks at the Free Movement protocol, infrastructure integration, trade integration, political integration and the theoretical framework on developmental regionalism.

### **Chapter 3: Materials and Methods**

This chapter presents the research philosophy adopted, data collection procedures, data processing and method of analysis.

### **Chapter 4: Results and Discussion**

This chapter provides the results of the questions asked by the study by offering quotes used to arrive at the themes presented in the discussion.

### **Chapter 5: Research Conclusions**

This chapter presents the study's conclusions of the study based on the objectives that were set.

### **Chapter 6: New Scientific Findings**

This chapter discusses the new findings derived from the study.

### **Chapter 7: Summary**

This is the summary of the entire dissertation.

## **2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Regional Integration in the East African Community (EAC)**

In 1960, following the end of colonization in most African countries, Africa was a divided continent weak and vulnerable to the world (AU et al., 2019). African heads of state and government saw regional integration as a way bring the continent together for development. However, the leaders struggled to reach a common understanding of what unity meant, and how it should be realized (Muyangwa Monde & Margaret A. Vogt, 2000). Initially, they split into two groups known as the Casablanca group and the Monrovia group. The Casablanca group included seven states: Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Tanzania, Guinea, Libya, Mali, and Morocco. The Monrovia group included countries like Liberia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, Cameroon, and several francophone countries like Benin, Togo, Gabon, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso and Congo (Brazzaville). It's important to point out that by the time these alliances were formed, some African nations, such as Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa and many others had not yet gained independence. This history highlights the ongoing debate surrounding regional integration in Africa.

The two groups first met in Casablanca, Morocco and Monrovia, Liberia in 1961. The Casablanca group concentrated on African unity or federation and was cautious about relationships with former colonial powers. The Monrovia group was more moderate and centered on cooperation among African nations without deep integration or political federation at the expense of nationalism. These ideological differences seemed to block any agreement on how to move forward. However, the Monrovia group which had more members carried the day and when they met in 1963, they reached a compromise to form the Organization of African Unity. Ever since, for the last 60 years, there have been numerous attempts to unite Africa using various programs. AUC (2019) states that some of these were when international programs suppressed their implementations while others just never lived up to desired results. However, there was a resuscitation of the desire to have an integrated Africa which lead to the creation of the Abuja treat of 1994, with the call to progressively pursue regional integration through Regional Economic Communities such as the East African Community .

When it comes to regional integration at the East African Community, partner states have been hesitant to transfer adequate authority to regional institutions to implement the laws and regulations needed to support the integration process (Masinde & Omolo, 2017). As a result, regional priorities are rarely reflected in national policies, and the regional integration agenda is often overlooked. The East African Community remains heavily dominated by state control over both decision making and institutional operations. This begs the question: can East African Community regional integration succeed with such a framework?

Verhaeghe & Mathieson (2017) analyzed the East African Community (EAC) policy from an institutional perspective by looking at formal and informal rules. They identified a number of important areas where policy implementation is impacted by the presence of weak or lack of formal institutions and the existence of influential informal institutions. There is a lack of institutionalization of formal rules designed to provide checks and balances within the EAC. Power sharing among the Summit, Council, and the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) does not exist in practice, although according to the EAC treaty, power is spread among these entities. What is witnessed is that the Summit and Council, made up of national politicians rather than East African Legislative Assembly member state representatives, have full control over EAC's functions. At the EAC Secretariat level, the executor of regional integration agreements, there is no power at all to sanction the partner states and supervise compliance. Discussions about strengthening the Secretariat into a Commission have not achieved results, and because of insufficient funding, they continuously struggle with staffing challenges, which hampers their activities (Mathieson, 2016).

Theoretically, although the limited roles of the EAC Secretariat were to be complemented by the other formal institutions to ensure compliance with EAC policies through penalties or sanctions, this has never happened. For example, the summit, which has the authority to sanction states when they do not comply with the treaty, has never occurred. Similarly, the East African Court of Justice that has the mandate to adjudicate disputes related to non-compliance, has been disregarded by the national courts, stating that they have complete discretion in deciding whether to refer a case to the Court of Justice (Eudes & Registrar, 2011).

Then there is the private sector, which would benefit or suffer from integration but has had limited involvement in EAC policy issues through official engagements. In 2012, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) recommended the Secretariat, national EAC Ministries, the Council, and the sectoral committees to initiate regular consultation avenues with national and regional civil society and private sector apex bodies. Despite the approval of this policy, these activities have not been implemented, and no budget had been allocated for them as of 2013 (EAC, 2014). However, in cases where the private sector has been active, like the Kenyan firms active engagement with EAC policies is not always beneficial. The Kenya Transport Association (KTA) and Tanzania Transport Association (TTA) who have resisted reforms to protect their businesses (Mathieson, 2016).

Notwithstanding the opposition, the private sector offers a promising way forward for EAC integration. Kenyan businesses, in particular, are significantly contributing in driving increased market integration and building domestic support for cross-border regional integration. This trend is underpinned by the strengthening of regional economies and their interconnectedness, driven by the expansion of local and international companies across Partner States' borders. Notably, Kenyan companies such as Safaricom, Kenya Commercial Bank, and Kenya Airlines are rapidly expanding their operations across the region, particularly in the financial, telecommunications, and retail

sectors. They are taking the lead on various aspects related to the regional integration agenda(Mathieson, 2016).

Just as one would expect in any regional integration, the EAC is not immune to informal influence. The Secretariat has been accused of patronage and a culture of per diems. This can be detrimental to the organization's overall effectiveness, given that positions within the EAC are well paid relative to comparable positions in national level. Additionally, staff members are awarded extra funds through generous per diems, sitting allowances, and study tour (World Bank, 2011). Consequently, EAC positions are highly sought, and those with the power to make appointments often utilize the positions as part of political patronage systems to reward their supporters.

The result is that this has led to significant skills gaps within the organs of the EAC and has created an organizational culture that prioritizes loyalty over delivering results. Furthermore, levels of bribery are notably high in all member states of the EAC, except for Rwanda (Transparency International, 2024). This issue has the potential to hinder the implementation of EAC policies, even when they have the backing of senior government officials. For example, corruption involving customs agents, law enforcement, private entities, and politicians at ports, customs checkpoints, and weighbridges has impeded efforts to streamline transportation across corridors (Tšehlo, 2024).

There are also broader external issues that influence regional integration in the EAC. One issue is multiple memberships across other Regional Economic Communities. The EAC partner states are part of multiple regional blocs and trade arrangements, such as Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS), in addition to various bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with foreign states. This gives rise to conflicting obligations of rules and standards for EAC member states to adhere to. The impact of multiple REC memberships is largely reflected in trade policy and barriers to the implementation of the common market. Efforts to establish a common external tariff have faced challenges due to a patchwork of exemptions, at least in part from the different free trade agreement memberships of EAC partner states (Karel Van Hoestenbergh et al., 2019).

The other issue facing EAC regional integration is competing interests. A case in point is that Kenya is a strong proponent of regional integration compared to other EAC member states due to the significant trade between Kenya and other EAC states. The exports of Kenya dominate intra-EAC trade, particularly high value primary and secondary goods. Kenya has been supportive of private sector interests, including those related to the EAC and is willing to bear the costs associated with intergovernmental coordination to expedite the integration process (Mathieson, 2016). The government of Kenya has made considerable effort to in implement EAC policies by improving the efficiency at Mombasa Port, establishing a regional Standard Gauge Rail network, addressing weighbridge issues, and easing visa restrictions.

However, Kenya's strong influence and economic dominance have raised concerns among some states about regional integration potentially favoring Kenyan interests over others. This has led to an increasingly tense standoff between elites in Tanzania and Kenya, which could impede further progress. Kenya's push to the fast-lane of EAC integration rubs off to Tanzania, the second largest economy in the EAC, which lacks a similarly extensive private sector with regional reach. This may be one of the reasons why Tanzania has the least compliance to policies aimed at eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers and standardizing quality and safety standards in trade as shown in figure 2 below. Tanzania is perceived to be more interested in a looser form of integration that would allow it space to manage its other regional commitments such as membership in SADC.

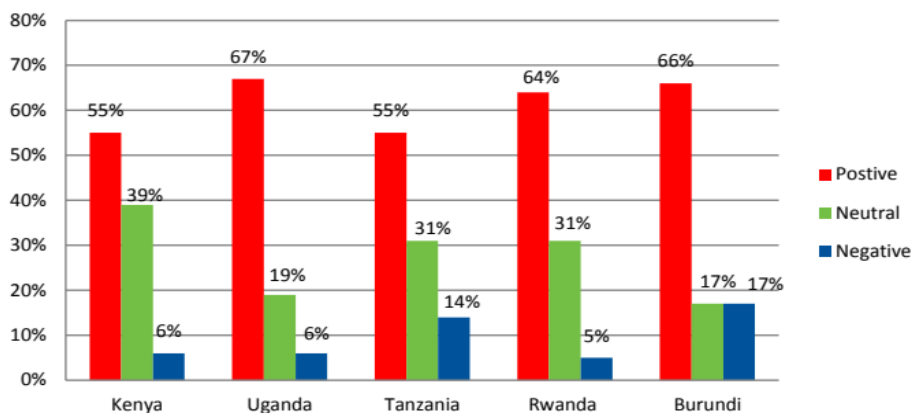
Country	Regional integration	Ranking	Trade integration	Ranking
Kenya	0.792	1	0.628	2
Uganda	0.717	2	0.829	1
Rwanda	0.685	3	0.532	3
United Republic of Tanzania	0.513	4	0.309	4

*Figure 2: EAC Partner States ranking in Regional and Trade Integration*

Source: (AU et al., 2019)

The differing approaches of Kenya and Tanzania have also affected the EAC's external relations. Kenya supports the Economic Partnership Agreement to maintain access to the EU market, while Tanzania strongly oppose it, believing that its industries will not be able to compete with their European counterparts. Kenya went ahead and signed the agreement to meet the private sector interests at the expense of the EAC integration.

The huge power imbalance between EAC states, with Kenya being a hegemony, allows her to assert tremendous influence on regional policy direction. By 2015, Kenya's GDP was 37% of the combined EAC, compared to Rwanda and Burundi at 6% and 2% respectively. Today, depending on the data used, it is estimated that this disparity has increased, with Kenya's GDP at 34%, Burundi at 0.92 %, Rwanda at 3.9%, Tanzania at 23%, and Uganda at 13.8% (World Bank, 2024). By (2022), Kenya's defence expenditure was US\$ 1155.20 million, followed by Uganda at US\$ 924.80 million (World Bank, 2024). Moreover, Kenya's access to the Indian Ocean through the port of Mombasa gives it a strategic transport and trade advantage as the gateway into the EAC. Trade Mark East Africa (2021)reports that 80% of Uganda's transit traffic passes through the Mombasa port, leading to Eastern DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan. This may also explain why Ugandans, Burundian's and Rwandans are the most positive about EAC regional integration.



*Figure 3: Citizen's Perception Towards EAC Regional Integration*

**Source:** (Trade Mark East Africa, 2019)

These factors enabled Kenya to dominate the regional policy agenda with the building of the Northern Transport Corridor despite Tanzania's opposition. This Kenya-Uganda-Rwanda coalition also known as the "coalition of the willing," worked together to enhance the smooth transportation of goods from the port of Mombasa. This was achieved through the development of the Standard Gauge Railway and the elimination of non-tariff barriers (Mathieson, 2016). However, the Kenyan government has caused uncertainty and Uganda and Rwanda are now turning to Tanzania instead of Kenya for infrastructure cooperation (Cannon & Mogaka, 2022). (Mathieson, 2016) states that there is a prevailing concern in Tanzania that regional integration may lead to an erosion of economic growth as it shifts in favor of Kenya, potentially allowing Kenya to benefit more than other countries. This apprehension has historical roots and has previously led to the dissolution of the first East African Cooperation. It continues to influence the reluctance to fully implement regional policies, particularly in sectors such as tourism.

Mwapachu (2017) states that "we cannot seriously talk about the EAC being market-driven when the key institutions that drive the market are only peripherally engaged in EAC's mission and work", as a result of the low levels of non-state actor engagement in EAC policy. This limits the EAC project's long-term viability and wastes the chance to foster "buy-in" to the project within Partners like Tanzania, where there is widespread mistrust of residents of other EAC members among some segments of the public. According to surveys, more Tanzanians have a negative opinion of people from other EAC nations than of the entire police and all elected officials combined (Trade Mark East Africa, 2019).

EAC (2025) highlighted significant concerns regarding the delayed disbursement of Partner States' contributions, resulting in arrears amounting to US\$34 million. Total contributions amounted to US\$27 million, with only Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda not having arrears. The perennial delayed contributions cause inefficiencies within the Secretariat, and reliance on donor funding from Germany, Norway, Denmark and USA (Tondel, 2017). However, donor funding comes with

provisos which do not always prioritize the agenda of the EAC, but those of the funding organizations. Additionally, in the cases where donor funding is involved, there are bureaucratic procedures to ensure transparency and accountability, causing further delays in the release of funds. There are also concerns with recurring non-tariff barriers, low citizen awareness and an inefficient decision-making process affecting the implementation of EAC policy decisions at both regional and national levels (AU et al., 2019). This was also confirmed by Trade Mark East Africa (2019) as shown in figure 3.

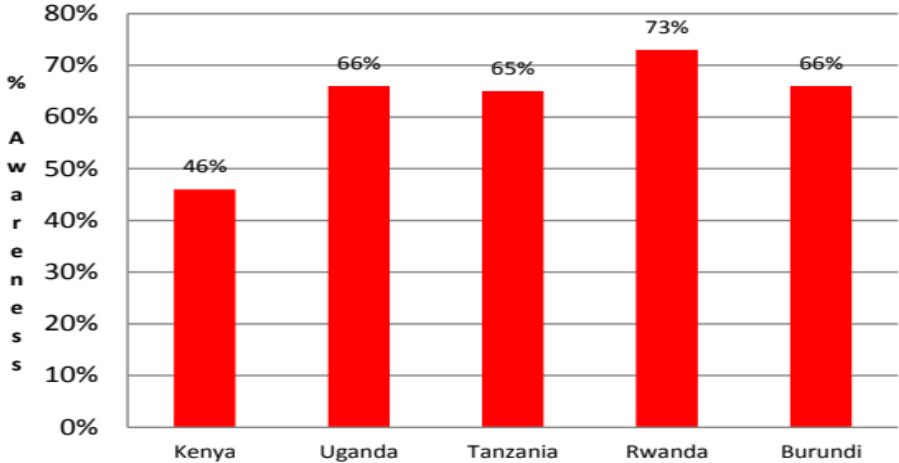


Figure 4: Citizen Awareness of EAC Regional Integration

Source: (Trade Mark East Africa, 2019)

**2.2 Free Movement and Tourism**

Free movement depends on the visa regimes adopted in countries across the globe. A visa is an authorization to travel to a foreign country in the form of a stamp in a passport. The traveler is expected to present it to the local immigration authorities, who then decide whether to permit entry into the country or not (AU & AfDB, 2023). Visas falls into different categories (transit, tourist, work etc) and countries have different procedures for issuing them. In the past, visas were frequently required before traveling to a destination. Today, e-visas are making it easier for travelers to apply and obtain visas before leaving home, reducing the administrative burden.

E-visas are electronic visas that can be obtained online for traveling to a foreign country. These digital visas are replacing the traditional paper-based visa application process, providing a more convenient option for travelers to acquire the required documentation for their trips. By applying for an e-visa, travelers can avoid the administrative visa applications (Pyvovar & Bandar, 2020). While e-visa systems can simplify the visa application process for travelers, they do not fully address the challenges faced by many African travelers when it comes to obtaining visas. Although e-visa systems can streamline the application process and reduce the time and effort required, they do not tackle the underlying issues that make it difficult for travelers to obtain visas. African

travelers still encounter discrimination and bias incontinence of going to embassies or consulates in person and instead complete the application process from the comfort of their homes. This not only saves time and effort but also reduces the overall administrative workload associated with international travel by simplifying the application process and making it more efficient for both travelers and the authorities responsible for processing when applying for visas, and e-visa systems may not effectively address these issues (AU & AfDB, 2023). Additionally, barriers such as high fees, complex application requirements, and limited internet access can still pose challenges for travelers, even with the introduction of e-visa systems. Therefore, while e-visa systems can facilitate travel, they are not a complete solution to the visa-related burdens faced by many travelers.

Eliminating the requirement for visas altogether is the most effective way to simplify travel and travel-related processes. Such a system would allow travelers to visit foreign countries without the need to apply for a visa beforehand, making it easier for them to travel. It would also increase tourism and business visitors by removing a significant barrier for individuals who wish to visit other countries, ultimately benefiting the global economy and fostering improved international relations. Visa-free entry would enhance the overall travel experience, ensuring it is more accessible and enjoyable for people worldwide (Lawson & Roychoudhury, 2016).

Some regions have established protocols for free movement, while others have not. The extent to which states open their borders to citizens of other countries within the bloc, as well as the REC's liberal visa policies, determine visa openness in the region. Others maintain the reciprocity principle in their visa regimes, meaning they grant to the country whose nationals visit the same visa privileges they enjoy the first country as visitors. to each other as the privileges they receive. In 2023, the average visa openness of the EAC improved, but it still ranked fifth out of the eight RECs, behind COMESA. Only Kenya, Rwanda, and South Sudan showed improved visa openness performance. Kenya granted visa-free entry to citizens of Djibouti and Mozambique, while Rwanda extended visa-free entry to all nationalities on the continent. South Sudan transitioned to a visa-on-arrival regime for citizens of Burundi and Rwanda, despite being an EAC member since 2016 and previously enjoying visa-free entry to Rwanda. The visa openness performance of Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, and the DRC remained unchanged.

AU et al. (2019) state that Kenya is the best performer in the EAC integration index followed by Uganda. The worst performers are South Sudan and Burundi. They further submit that EAC performs strongly on the free movement of people dimension. One-stop border posts have decreased the time spent processing immigration procedures for both people and goods. Busia one-stop border post is the busiest in EAC clearing about 300 trucks every day, while private cars and commuter buses take a couple of minutes to cross (TMEA, 2018). Although there is progress within the region thanks to the protocol, generally Free Movement within Africa continues to be a challenge due to lack of efficient air connectivity. According to InterVISTAS (2018), many African states continue to restrict international air travel to protect their national carriers. These

restrictions have made travel within Africa difficult compared to intercontinental travel. Many African states have signed highly liberalized agreements with European, Asian and Middle Eastern nations and the United States making intercontinental travel more accessible than ever before, as compared to continental travel within Africa.

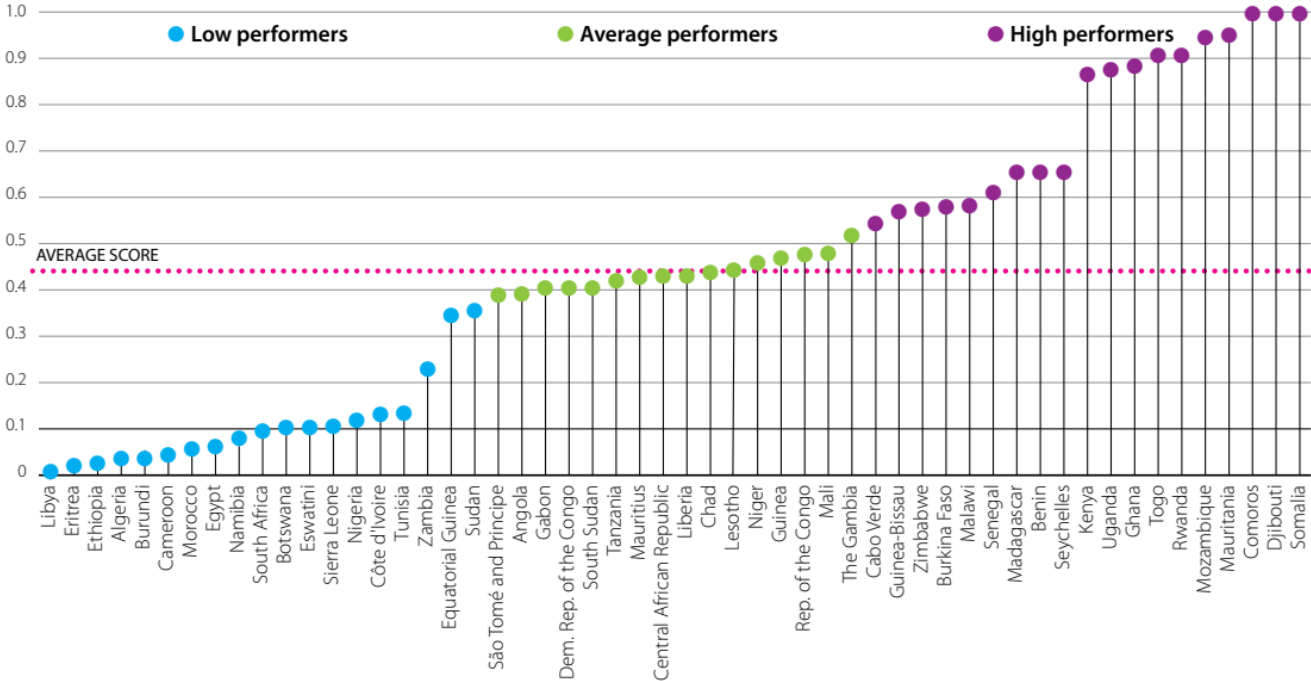


Figure 5: Free movement Index in Africa.

Source: AU & AfDB (2024).

### 2.3 Infrastructure Integration

Transport infrastructure encompasses the physical facilities and systems required for the transportation of goods and people, including roads, railways, airports, and ports. Various factors such as natural disasters, political instability, and security threats can disrupt or impede the operation of transport infrastructure. Air transport within Africa remains expensive relative to global standards, with intra-African travel found to be significantly more expensive per mile than in other world regions. Various studies have documented benefits of liberalized air travel across Africa indicating that it leads to accelerated economic growth, for example between Kenya and South Africa, lower fares within Southern African Development Community with increased volumes to and from Johannesburg and huge benefits to the tourism and hospitality sector (Hattem, 2017).

Despite the increasing infrastructure development across the African Continent, there are still huge inadequacies in all forms of modes of transport. Africa is a continent that encompasses 11,668,599 square miles (30,221,532 square kilometers), with a horizontal width of 4,355 miles (7,009

kilometers) from Dakar to Mogadishu and a vertical length of 4,504 miles (7,244 kilometers) from Cape Town to Tripoli, (World Bank, 2024). Together with the main African islands, travel within Africa is difficult. Africans travelling within the continent must travel great distances and connect via Europe or the Middle East (Njoya et al., 2018).

### *2.3.1 Air Transport*

The Yamoussoukro Decision was adopted in the capital of Cote d'ivoire to address the need for liberalizing air transport in Africa from restrictive regulations that shelter African national airlines while increasing airfares and impeding growth of air traffic (AU et al., 2019). It was a follow up on Yamoussoukro Declaration of 1988 that many of the 44 signatory countries had agreed to deregulate air services and promote transnational competition in regional air markets. The meeting resolved to adopt the decision with the main objective of liberalizing traffic rights up to fifth freedom.

In an attempt to audit why it failed, Schlumberger (2010) argues that it is instructive to re-examine the Abuja Treaty. This is because The Yamoussoukro Decision had its legal basis in Article 10 of the Abuja Treaty. This article provided that decisions of the Assembly of the African Economic Community shall be binding (OAU, 1991). However, at the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the African Economic Community in Sirte, Libya on 9, September 1999, the same day that Yamoussoukro Decision was to come into force, a new organization called African Union was established. The idea was to hasten implementation of the Treaty establishing African Economic Community while also handling globalization challenges.

Schlumberger (2010) points out, that the departure between African Economic Community and African Union was that the constitutive act of African Union does not provide for the Assembly's decisions to be automatically binding and enforceable on member states and organs. It also states that the African Union act shall replace the Charter of the OAU after a transitional period of one year taking precedence over and supersede any inconsistent or contrary provision of the treaty establishing African Economic Community.

In essence, the Abuja Treaty was cancelled by the constitutive act adopted to establish African Union. Decision-making is now by consensus and two-thirds majority of member states. The words "automatically binding" were omitted giving member states the rights to ratify major decisions taken in the future. This development marked the end of the Yamoussoukro Decision, on the very day it was meant to take effect. Over twenty years later, African aviation has never celebrated liberalization that it came so close to attaining (AU et al., 2019).

Additionally, the other biggest impediment to full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision has been a protectionist policy towards national carriers (Schlumberger, 2010). Some countries continue to restrict market access under the pretext that their national airline is not ready to

compete in a liberalized market. This reflects the desire by each country to have a national airline and the absence of a mechanism to form and jointly own airlines on the continent is a major impediment to liberalization (Kiema, 2025).

Had it been implemented, the Yamoussoukro Decision would have promoted all the five freedoms of the sky (First Freedom-The right to fly over another nation's territory without landing. Second Freedom-The right to land in a foreign country for non-traffic reasons such as maintenance or refueling, without picking up or wetting down revenue traffic. Third Freedom-The right to carry people or cargo from the airline's own country to the other country. Fourth Freedom- The right to carry people or cargo from the other country to the airline's own country. Fifth Freedom-The right to carry traffic between two foreign countries with services starting or ending in the airline's own country (also known as beyond rights) (Schlumberger, 2010). A new attempt to liberalize African air transport was renewed by the Single African Air Transport Market.

The African Union (AU) launched the Single African Air Transport Market in January 2018. The initiative is part of Agenda 2063, and the aim is to establish an initiative to improve connectivity, promote intra-African trade, and foster economic growth across the continent. A study by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) suggests that the implementation of SAATM could increase intra-African air traffic by 51%, resulting in a projected contribution of \$1.3 billion to the continent's GDP and the creation of 155,000 new jobs. By enhancing air connectivity, SAATM has the potential to stimulate tourism, trade, and investment, consequently fostering broader economic development and integration across Africa (Njoya, 2016).

Nevertheless, there are potential challenges to implementing SAATM. The lack of uniform regulatory frameworks and varying safety standards across African countries may pose significant challenges to the successful implementation of SAATM. Each AU member state has its own set of regulations used to operate the aviation sector. Additionally, the capacity and infrastructure constraints in some African airports are considered potential impediments to realizing the full potential of SAATM. In terms of the potential impact of SAATM on domestic airlines and smaller aviation markets, critics argue that the liberalization of air transport may benefit larger, more established carriers, potentially leading to increased competition and challenges for smaller airlines. This could potentially result in market dominance by a few established carriers, affecting the viability of smaller airlines and regional air connectivity (Kiema, 2025).

SAATM has the potential to generate enhanced connectivity. For example, countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya, which embraced liberal policies, experienced significant growth in their aviation sectors (IATA, 2024). This growth in air services has the potential to reduce travel time and costs, thereby facilitating the movement of people and goods across the continent. However, critics contend that while liberalized air transport policies can lead to increased air services, they may also pose challenges related to safety and regulatory oversight. The rapid expansion of air

services, especially in regions with developing infrastructure, could potentially lead to safety concerns and regulatory discrepancies, which may undermine the positive impact of enhanced connectivity (Tolcha et al., 2021).

The liberalization of air transport markets in regions like Europe has led to increased competition, resulting in reduced airfares and enhanced service quality (Abate & Christidis, 2020). This has improved accessibility to air travel and positively impacted passengers. Advocates of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) argue that its implementation could similarly stimulate competition among airlines, leading to more competitive pricing and improved services, ultimately making air travel more accessible in the region. However, while increased competition may lead to lower airfares, it could also potentially compromise safety and service quality. Intense price competition might incentivize airlines to cut corners on maintenance, staff training, and operational procedures, ultimately posing risks to passenger safety. Additionally, there are concerns that in pursuit of cost efficiency, airlines might reduce the frequency or quality of certain routes, limiting options for passengers and potentially hampering accessibility, especially to remote or less profitable destinations (Tolcha et al., 2021).

SAATM would create opportunities in the East African Community and benefit tourism in several ways. As for the countries that have ratified it, as of the time of writing, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda have ratified the open skies agreement within the East African Community. Tanzania and South Sudan have signed but not ratified the agreement yet.

Political and economic factors are among the reasons preventing the creation of SAATM. Protectionism is a major concern as many African countries try to protect their national carriers from foreign competition. Accepting unrestricted access to foreign airlines may lead to loss of business for the domestic airlines. Because governments offer financial support or subsidies to their national carriers, they are usually hesitant to allow liberalization within the aviation sector (Tolcha et al., 2021). However, it is important to consider the potential benefits of a single aviation air market, such as increased competition leading to improved services and lower prices for consumers. The promotion of a level playing field in the aviation industry can stimulate innovation and efficiency, ultimately benefiting both airlines and passengers.

Sovereignty comes with varying aviation regulations across African countries. For example, in East Africa, Kenya and Uganda have their own aviation regulations influenced by their specific safety, security, and economic interests (Kiema, 2025). These regulations are set to ensure that the aviation industry operates in a manner that aligns with the objectives and priorities of each country, and any attempt to harmonize these regulations would entail compromises that may not be acceptable to all parties. Kenya may prioritize certain safety measures that Uganda may not see as essential, creating differences in regulatory requirements. Furthermore, safety standards differ across African countries, as seen in the case of Ethiopia and South Africa. Each country has its

unique set of safety standards and certification processes, making it challenging to harmonize these standards without extensive negotiations and mutual agreements (IATA, 2024). For instance, South Africa's Civil Aviation Authority has its stringent requirements for aircraft certification, pilot training, and air traffic control measures, which may not completely align with the standards set by Ethiopia's Civil Aviation Authority. As a result, finding common ground that satisfies both parties can be an arduous task.

Infrastructure and technological disparities pose significant obstacles to the harmonization of air transport within the region. For example, the quality of airports and air traffic control systems varies considerably across East African countries. While countries like Kenya boast modern, well-equipped airports, others such as South Sudan struggle with outdated infrastructure that hinders efficient air travel. Disparities in technological systems for booking, tracking, and managing flights across borders further complicate efforts to integrate the aviation market (Njoya et al., 2018). However, although infrastructure and technological disparities exist, initiatives like SAATM make regional integration feasible. EAC can work towards standardizing infrastructure and integrating technological systems, to enjoy the benefits of a single aviation market, such as increased connectivity and economic growth (Njoya, 2016). Therefore, while infrastructure and technological disparities present significant hurdles, they should not deter efforts to realize the potential of a harmonized aviation market in East Africa.

The East African Community is yet to harmonize labor laws within the aviation industry. Kenya has different regulations regarding working hours and overtime compared to Tanzania, influencing the working conditions of airline employees across borders. Harmonizing these laws within the EAC to ensure equitable treatment of airline employees presents a complex task given the divergent legal frameworks (Gathii, 2011). Moreover, within the EAC, union resistance to changes in the aviation industry is evident. For example, airline unions in Kenya have historically resisted initiatives that could lead to job losses or alterations in working conditions. This resistance is based on the fear of potential negative impacts on employees such as loss of job security or reduced benefits.

The implementation of SAATM has led to several challenges, particularly concerning airline alliances and competition. Existing alliances within the EAC, such as the cooperation between Kenya Airways and Tanzania's Precision Air, may conflict with the overarching goal of establishing a unified aviation market within the region. While such alliances may enhance connectivity and efficiency for the member countries involved, they can also raise concerns regarding fair competition and market dominance. Aligning competition policies within the EAC to prevent monopolistic practices while ensuring fair competition has proven to be a daunting task. For instance, the competition between Ethiopian Airlines and other carriers within the EAC raises questions about how to regulate competition to prevent one airline from exerting undue market

influence, while still fostering a competitive environment that benefits consumers (Tolcha et al., 2021).

There are also economic disparities that hamper the implementation of a single aviation market within the EAC. For example, while Kenya may have a more developed aviation industry with better infrastructure and resources, other member countries like Burundi and South Sudan may struggle to keep up due to their lower economic development. Furthermore, variations in cost structures within the EAC member countries pose a significant challenge to reconciling economic disparities (InterVISTAS, 2018). For instance, differences in fuel prices, taxes, and charges across the EAC member states can create inequalities that affect the competitiveness of airlines operating within the single aviation market. This can lead to concerns about fair competition and profitability for airlines based in countries with higher cost structures compared to their counterparts in countries with lower cost structures.

Harmonization of security protocols across member states when Tanzania has different security protocols for passengers and cargo compared to Kenya can complicate efforts towards a unified approach. The differing threat levels and responses to terrorism within EAC member states pose a significant obstacle to standardizing security measures. For example, Kenya may have a higher threat level and more stringent security responses to terrorism compared to other EAC countries due to the threat posed by the Somalia based terrorism group, making it difficult to establish uniform security standards. Efforts such as the development of a common EAC aviation security framework, along with joint training and capacity-building programs, demonstrate a commitment to overcoming these hurdles (Irandu, 2018). By fostering open dialogue and collaboration among EAC member states, the potential for mitigating security challenges and achieving a cohesive single aviation market becomes more attainable.

Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have different regulations regarding emissions, noise pollution, and other environmental concerns. Harmonizing these regulations to facilitate a single aviation market can be quite challenging due to varying levels of economic development, differing priorities, and resource availability within each partner state. However, it is important to acknowledge that despite these challenges, the EAC has made significant strides in addressing environmental concerns within the aviation sector. For example, the EAC member states have initiated collaborative efforts to develop common environmental standards and guidelines for aviation activities. Additionally, the establishment of the East African Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (EAC-CASSOA) has provided a platform for promoting harmonized environmental regulations and standards within the aviation sector (EAC, 2024a).

### **2.3.2 Road Transport**

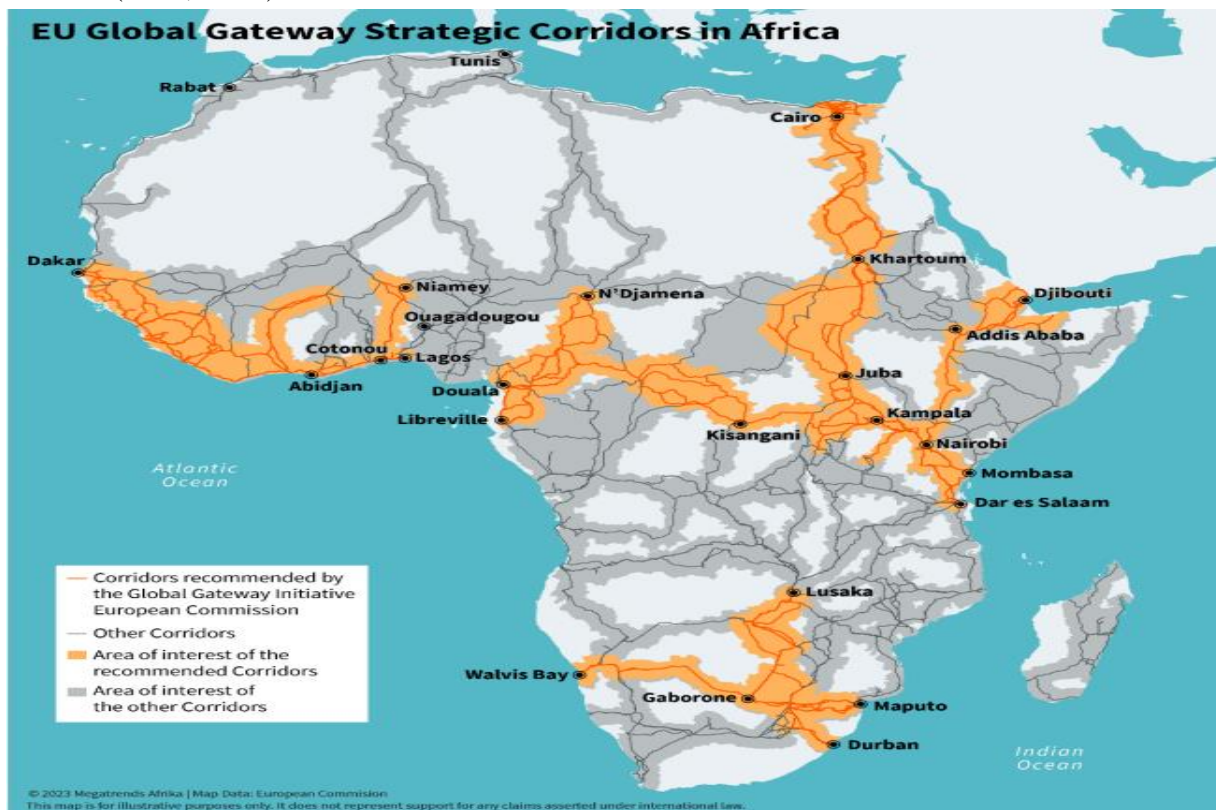
In comparison to other corridors on the continent, those in East Africa demonstrate relatively good performance. The road network is generally in good condition, although there are some areas with poor-quality roads and significant stretches of unpaved road along certain corridors. Despite

having the second smallest trade density of all the African subregions, East Africa boasts some of the best road conditions. Roadblocks and random police checks are common, leading to increased delays for tour vans. The strategic significance of transportation corridors in East Africa has been emphasized by the identification of ten main corridors covering a total length of approximately 14,460 km by the regional community.

Table 2: Paved and Unpaved Roads Across Selected EAC States

Country	Paved Roads (km)	Unpaved Roads (km)	Total Road Network (km)	Percentage of Paved Roads	Percentage of Unpaved Roads
Kenya	10500	90000	100500	10.4%	89.6%
Uganda	5000	43000	48000	10.4%	89.6%
Tanzania	8000	56000	64000	12.5%	87.5%
Rwanda	4500	14000	18500	24.3%	75.7%

Source: (EAC, 2018)



Source: (Irandu & Owilla, 2020)

Figure 6: Road Corridors in Africa

The Northern Corridor between Mombasa and Bujumbura forms part of the Trans-African Highway's Mombasa-Lagos route, while the Tunduma-Moyale road is an integral segment of the

Cape to Cairo Highway, (Kaminchia, 2020). These corridors play a pivotal role in facilitating import and export activities, with the Northern Corridor, spanning 1,700 km, serving Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern DRC, and the 1,300 km long Central Corridor originating from the port of Dar es Salaam and serving Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Eastern DRC. The strategic priority placed on the rehabilitation and upgrading of these corridors underscores their critical importance in regional trade and connectivity.

The Northern Corridor is crucial in East Africa as it connects seven out of the eight EAC countries—Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, South Sudan and Somalia—to the port of Mombasa. It also provides links to parts of northern Tanzania. In Kampala, the corridor branches off toward Kigali (Rwanda) and Juba (South Sudan). In the southern part of the EAC, the Central Corridor holds significant importance as it connects the port of Dar es Salaam to markets in Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and the DRC. Along the southern side of Lake Victoria, the Central Corridor route from Bujumbura to Dar es Salaam begins as a well-maintained paved road in Burundi, while the Tanzanian section, although only partially paved, is also fairly well kept (Verhaeghe & Mathieson, 2017).

The Northern Corridor is fully paved, while the Central Corridor is almost entirely paved. The most recent study also emphasizes the significant regional disparities in the condition and types of corridors in East Africa. A large portion, ranging from 84% to 97%, of the Northern Corridor, which connects Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda is completely paved. The higher level of paving along the Northern Corridor is attributed to the heavier traffic concentration. In general, transportation to Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda is more cost-effective via the Northern Corridor compared to the Central Corridor. The Northern Corridor holds a competitive advantage over the Central Corridor for Burundi, despite Bujumbura being closer to Dar es Salaam than to Mombasa. Port times typically make up 50–80% of the total time required to transport imports to landlocked countries (Verhaeghe & Mathieson, 2017).

Better roads make tourist destinations more accessible, leading to reduced travel time and costs for tourists. For instance, improved road connectivity to national parks, beaches, and cultural sites in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda and Rwanda has been linked to increased tourist arrivals. With increased tourist arrivals, more revenue is generated, creating jobs, and stimulating local economies. Tourism-related businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and tour operators, have benefited from the influx of tourists facilitated by improved road infrastructure (Kanwal et al., 2020).

Similarly, improved road conditions have contribute to the safety and comfort of tourists on cross-border tourism. Driving within the region with consistent road signage and better-maintained roads have enhanced the overall travel experience, thus positively influencing tourism management. This is because integrated road networks play a crucial role in promoting the EAC as a single tourist

destination. The development of regional tourist circuits, such as the Great Lakes circuit connecting attractions in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania, offers diverse experiences within a single trip, thus promoting multi-country tourism packages.

The 1985 Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Agreement is a treaty among the countries of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda with the goal of facilitating the movement of goods and people across their borders. The agreement sets out various measures to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of transit and transport along the Northern Corridor, which is a crucial trade route in East Africa. These measures include harmonizing customs procedures, reducing non-tariff barriers, and improving infrastructure such as roads, railways, and ports (Brenton & Hoffman, 2016).

The agreement also fosters collaboration in areas such as trade facilitation, information sharing, and joint investment in transportation infrastructure. By streamlining and coordinating transit and transport activities, the agreement aims to enhance regional trade, economic integration, and overall development among the participating countries. The Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Agreement has played a pivotal role in promoting cross-border trade and economic cooperation among the signatory countries. The Democratic Republic of Congo became a signatory to the Agreement in 1987, allowing for the transit of goods. This Agreement was designed to facilitate trade and commerce among the member states by ensuring the seamless movement of goods through their territories (Mathieson, 2016).

Many recent transport integration achievements have stemmed from decisions made at the national level and coordination among states, independent of the policies of the East African Community (EAC) transport sector. One notable cross-border initiative is the Northern Corridor Integration Project, led by Kenya and involving Uganda and Rwanda. This initiative has enabled substantial progress, which may not have been feasible at the EAC level due to the differing priorities of Tanzania and Burundi. However, as these initiatives operate without oversight from the EAC Secretariat, they have the potential to undermine the EAC's authority. Another example is the Standard Gauge Railway, which, although aligned with the EAC Railways Masterplan, appears to have been incorporated into the plan only after its completion (Verhaeghe & Mathieson, 2017).

The Northern Corridor is a vital transportation route linking the East African Community (EAC) countries. Alongside the Central Corridor, it serves as one of the primary transport routes for the EAC. Originating from the port of Mombasa in Kenya, the Northern Corridor spans through Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan, playing a crucial role in facilitating the movement of goods and people within the region. This corridor is instrumental in promoting trade and economic development within the EAC countries. It serves as a key transportation route for goods to and from the landlocked countries of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan, providing them access to the Indian Ocean through the port of Mombasa. Furthermore, the corridor fosters

regional integration and cooperation by bolstering connectivity and fostering economic growth and development in the EAC countries (EAC, 2018).

Growth of tourism relies on the quality of road infrastructure. When road conditions are poor, tourism businesses struggle with logistical operations, leading to poor customer satisfaction and a decrease in destination competitiveness. This is why governments must prioritize road development linking tourism destinations (Brenton & Hoffman, 2016).

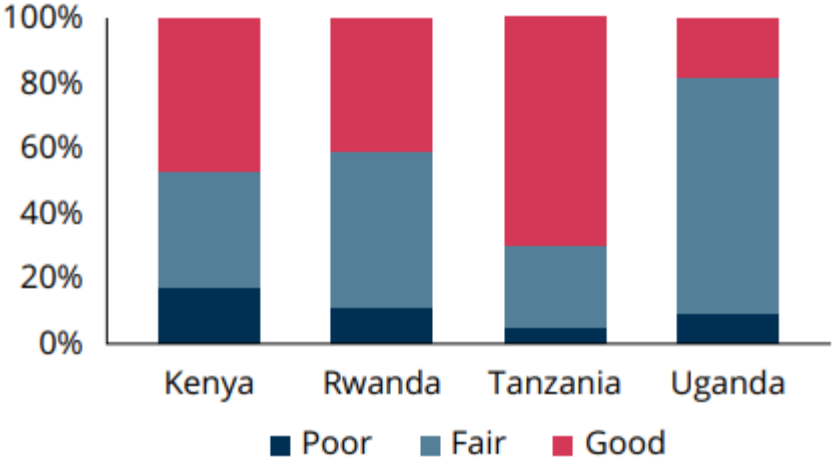


Figure 7: Quality of Road Network. Source: (Brenton & Hoffman, 2016)

Railway Transport

Commonly referred to as the Northern Corridor Railway line, the Mombasa to Kampala railway was constructed by the British Colonialists, to help in transporting goods out of both Uganda and Kenya. The railway was managed by East Africa Railway and Harbor between 1949 and 1977 when the East African Cooperation was dissolved, leading to the establishment of national railway authorities: the Kenya Railways Corporation and the Uganda Railways Corporation. Kenya Railways Corporation experienced several financial irregularities such as selling its land to the elite at prices below the market value, looting of staff pension funds. Along with these challenges, there was little investment to repair the track and rolling stock steadily decline (Brenton & Hoffman, 2016). Ultimately, the performance and efficiency of the Kenya Railways Corporation declined, and the road haulage sector grew. Unfortunately, the same political elite who plundered it, gained interest in road haulage and forbade other government agencies from transporting certain goods like fertilizers, through the railway. The elite bought tracks, then awarded themselves tenders to transport government goods, effectively sealing the fate of Kenya Railways Corporation.

In 2011, the EAC Heads of State met and resolved to upgrade all the region’s railway lines to standard gauge. The plan includes the construction of Mombasa-Nairobi-Kampala line, which will

eventually head to Kigali and Juba. Since then, China and Kenya partnership in 2014 modernized and inaugurated the railway line between Mombasa and Nairobi in 2017. It has reduced travel time between Nairobi and Mombasa from around 10 hours by bus to around 6 hours by train. It is more attractive to tourists because it passes through attractions like Tsavo National Park, allowing for wildlife sightings during the journey. Lower prices compared to road transport has also boosted domestic tourism (Wangai W. Agnes et al., 2020).

In the case of Uganda Railways Corporation, the decline was largely due to the deterioration in the operations along the Kenyan section. Uganda was therefore a victim of Kenyan events, which had to cover over 1000 KM before reaching the boarder. In addition, it also faced political interference, overstaffing and low labor productivity, together with loss making commercial passenger services. Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda are collaborating to enhance port performance and railway construction on the Northern Corridor as part of their effort to expedite integration. This collaborative effort, known as the "Coalition of the Willing," is driven by the shared interests of the current presidents of the three countries. Uganda has consistently pushed for EAC integration to reduce the cost of land-based imports, while Rwanda and Kenya later emerged as proponents of EAC integration (Gorecki, 2020). The Kenyan government has multiple reasons to support the acceleration of integration efforts, including the significance of EAC markets for exports (Brenton & Hoffman, 2016).

Map of African Railways

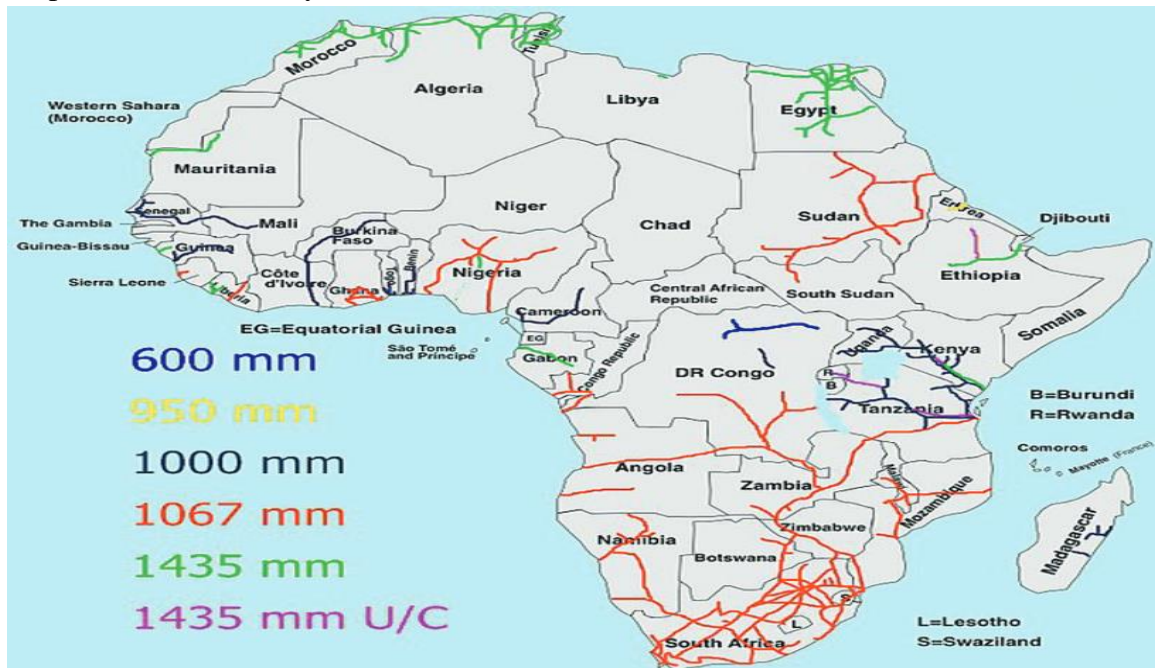


Figure 8: Railway Network Source: (Irandu & Owilla, 2020)

The decisions and actions of political leaders and government officials have significantly shaped the development and effectiveness of transportation systems in Kenya and Uganda. Political interests, such as the desire to garner support from specific regions or to prioritize certain

industries, have influenced the allocation of resources and the implementation of transportation projects, resulting in disparities in the quality and accessibility of transport infrastructure across different regions and sectors. Other constraints, such as poor planning, opposition from rival elites, and corruption, also impact infrastructure integration. For instance, middle-men vying for contracts can disrupt procurement processes, as seen in the case of the Standard Gauge Railway in Kenya ((Wangai W. Agnes et al., 2020)).

The Tanga-Arusha-Musoma-New Kampala Railway and Lake Victoria Ports Project, a proposed railway and port infrastructure project aimed at enhancing transportation and trade in the East African region, has encountered challenges due to divergent interests and a lack of trust among the involved parties, resulting in delays and setbacks in the project's implementation. The project has been hampered by conflicting interests among the involved countries, including Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya, leading to disputes over the project's design, funding, and management. Moreover, a lack of mutual trust has impeded effective collaboration and decision-making, contributing to the project's challenges. Consequently, the project has not realized its full potential in enhancing transportation and trade in the region (Mwesigye, 2021).

For the Uganda's SGR, various branches or departments of the Ugandan government were independently holding discussions with three different Chinese companies. This indicates a lack of coordination or communication within the government, as each entity was pursuing separate negotiations with different Chinese firms. This lack of unity or centralized decision-making could potentially result in inefficiency, confusion, or conflicting agreements between the government and the Chinese companies. To address this fragmented situation, the government needed to establish a unified consortium and a shared work plan (Adero & Aligula, 2012).

The Government of Uganda has placed a strong emphasis on improving the port of Mombasa, which currently handles 80% of the country's imports. Uganda's land-locked status presents a significant challenge to enhancing transport infrastructure, as the nation depends on the coastlines of neighboring countries for efficient transport services. However, cooperation between countries is hindered by collective action problems and the absence of a robust regional organization to resolve disputes. For instance, the proposed Tanga-Arusha-Musoma-New Kampala Railway and Ports Projects is facing delays in essential investments due to a lack of trust between Tanzania and Uganda, leading to concerns about the project's feasibility (Wangai W. Agnes et al., 2020).

The Port of Mombasa in Kenya serves as a vital transport infrastructure in East Africa. However, it has encountered challenges such as labor strikes, political unrest, and security threats from piracy and terrorism (OECD & ACET, 2020). These disruptions have led to operational delays and increased costs for businesses. It's clear that political will alone is insufficient. Proper planning, adequate funding, effective management, and stakeholder engagement are all essential for the successful development and maintenance of transportation infrastructure and services. Without these critical

factors, transportation projects cannot be successfully implemented. Therefore, while political will is important, it must be complemented by other necessary elements for successful transportation outcomes .

In Kenya, infrastructure development is a key priority, as evidenced by the Kenya Vision 2030. Notable infrastructure projects include the construction of the new port at Lamu, railway development, and investments from Lamu to Ethiopia and South Sudan. Nevertheless, infrastructure development is often impeded by political economy factors, with inefficiencies and delays stemming from influential interests and discontented intermediaries (Mathieson, 2016).

### **2.3.3 Ports in EAC**

The primary ports in the region comprise the Port of Mombasa in Kenya, the Port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, as well as emerging ports like Lamu, Port of Zanzibar, Port of Tanga, and Port of Kisumu. These ports play a crucial role as key entry points for both freight and passenger movement, promoting economic connectivity within the EAC and beyond.

These ports help in facilitating tourism by serving as entry points for international travelers. The Port of Mombasa, as the largest and busiest port in the EAC, has modern terminal facilities and efficient operations, making it a key entry point for tourists arriving by sea (KPA, 2020). Similarly, the Port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania serves as an essential hub for maritime trade and passenger traffic, with ongoing modernization efforts aimed at boosting tourism by improving accessibility (National Bureau of Statistics Tanzania, 2023). Moreover, smaller ports like Zanzibar, Tanga, and Kisumu support regional connectivity, with the Port of Zanzibar being a popular entry point for visitors to the Zanzibar archipelago, thereby contributing significantly to the tourism sector (OECD & ACET, 2020).

When it comes to port infrastructure and the EAC regional integration, focus has been on the capacity and the efficiency of imports and exports through Mombasa and Dar es salaam. However, good ports also offer opportunities for countries to boost their tourism sector, by enabling cruise ships to dock. For example, lobbying by the various stakeholders interested in EAC regional integration led to the upgrading of the Mombasa port, which has since received four cruise ships with a total of 8, 480 tourists in a span of 3 months, and has the capacity of attracting 140, 000 tourists annually (Juma, 2024).

Although ports in the EAC play a vital role in enhancing tourism, they face several challenges that hinder their full potential. Inadequate port infrastructure limits the capacity to handle large volumes of passenger traffic, highlighting the need for upgrades to accommodate modern cruise ships and enhance the overall tourist experience (OECD & ACET, 2020). Bureaucratic inefficiencies, such as lengthy customs procedures and visa regulations, can deter tourists, emphasizing the importance of streamlining processes to create a more tourist-friendly environment (UNWTO,

2018). Additionally, security concerns, including piracy and regional instability, pose significant threats to maritime tourism, necessitating the strengthening of security measures and regional cooperation to ensure the safety of tourists and promote the region as a safe travel destination (Baya Samuel, 2020).

However, despite these challenges, there are opportunities for growth through regional cooperation and public-private partnerships aimed at upgrading port facilities and enhancing tourism services. For instance, investments in port infrastructure can lead to broader improvements in regional infrastructure, benefiting tourism indirectly by facilitating easier access to tourist destinations through improved road and rail connections (OECD & ACET, 2020). Moreover, enhancing port facilities can attract more visitors, leading to increased spending on local services and thereby boosting the hospitality sector, as observed in the economic spillover from port activities .

#### **2.4 Tourism and Trade in the East African Community**

Tourism and trade have historically been integral to the East African economy, with tourism contributing significantly to the region's GDP and providing jobs for millions. East Africa is a popular tourist destination due to its diverse natural attractions, including safaris, beaches, and cultural heritage sites. According to the (World Trade Report, 2019).East Africa's tourism sector accounted for approximately 8.5% of the region's GDP, with over 6 million visitors annually. However, trade in the region also plays a vital role in supporting the tourism sector by enhancing the movement of goods, services, and people.

Trade integration in the EAC has been encouraged by the establishment of the East African Customs Union (EACU) in 2005 and the Common Market Protocol in 2010, which aims to facilitate the free movement of goods, services, and people. These agreements have fostered increased collaboration among member states, contributing to the growth of both trade and tourism (EAC, 2014).For example, tourism-related goods and services such as transportation, hospitality, and travel services have become more accessible within the EAC.

Trade integration within the EAC has a profound impact on tourism, particularly through the reduction of tariffs and the enhancement of logistics infrastructure. The establishment of a common market has made cross-border travel easier for tourists, as citizens of member states can travel freely within the region, improving access to tourism destinations across East Africa. Additionally, harmonization of visa policies has simplified the travel process for tourists (EAC, 2021).

Moreover, improved trade in transportation services, such as road and rail networks, has facilitated tourism activities. For instance, the construction of modern roads linking Kenya to Uganda and Rwanda has made it easier for tourists to travel between these countries, increasing tourism flows across the borders (Wangai W. Agnes et al., 2020).

The integration of tourism and trade offers significant benefits to the East African region, including economic diversification, job creation, and regional stability. Trade integration has contributed to the development of tourism infrastructure, such as airports, hotels, and roads, which support both

industries. Increased trade also promotes the exchange of ideas and cultural awareness, further enhancing the appeal of East Africa as a tourist destination (Ejones et al., 2021).

However, challenges remain, including the uneven distribution of infrastructure development and the need for greater cooperation between private and public sectors. While some regions have seen significant improvements in tourism infrastructure, others, particularly rural areas, remain underdeveloped, hindering tourism growth in those regions. Additionally, the lack of a comprehensive approach to managing cross-border trade and tourism policies has led to inconsistent implementation across the member states.

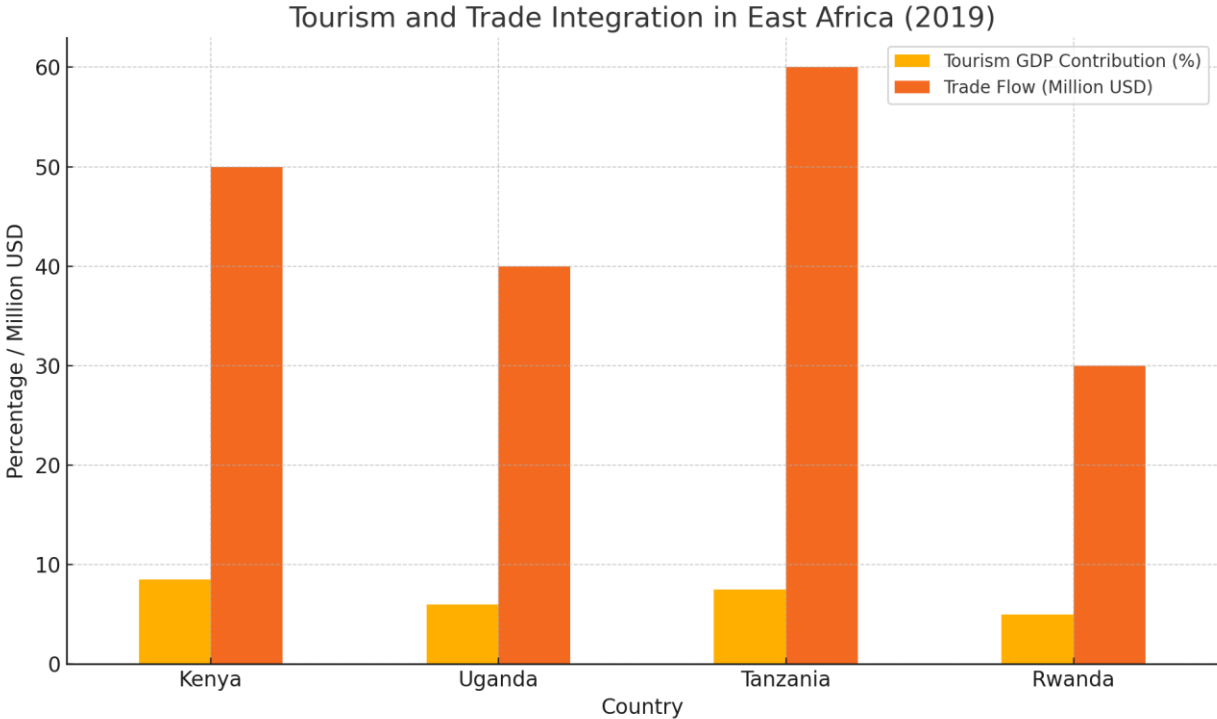


Figure 9: Source: (World Trade Report, 2019)

**2.4.1 EAC Common Market Protocol 2009**

Article 16 of the EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP), which ensures the free movement of services and services suppliers within the East African Community (EAC) under the four modes of supply. It draws parallels to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) by highlighting the flexibility that the EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP) provides to member states in adjusting their commitments based on sector-specific constraints and national regulatory regimes. The CMP allows Partner States to determine the extent to which they want to liberalize their services sectors (EAC, 2009).

The provision of free movement of services and service suppliers within the East African Community (EAC) undoubtedly has significant implications for the tourism sector within the region. This is expected to generate positive impact through the enhancement of competitiveness

and efficiency in the tourism industry through the cross-border movement of services and suppliers, others are against this idea. (Scharpf, 2010) indicates that free movement of services and service suppliers may lead to increased competition that could negatively influence local tourism businesses, especially smaller enterprises that may struggle to compete with larger, established providers from other EAC member states. This could potentially result in a concentration of tourism benefits in the hands of a few dominant players, limiting the overall socioeconomic development impact within local communities.

Additionally, the varying regulatory regimes and standards in different EAC member states could pose challenges for achieving harmonization in the tourism sector. While the CMP provides flexibility for member states to adjust their commitments based on sector-specific constraints and national regulatory regimes, this flexibility could lead to disparities in quality and consumer protection standards across different jurisdictions, potentially undermining the overall reputation of the East African tourism sector. Moreover, divergent regulatory environments could complicate efforts to ensure fair competition and create a level playing field for all tourism businesses across the region as witnessed in the disputes between Kenya and Tanzania (Zambakari, 2015).

Annex V of the CMP reveals the specific sectors in which Partner States made commitments to liberalize. These sectors include business, communication, distribution, education, finance, tourism, and transport services. The EAC Common Market Scorecard for 2016 further indicates that during negotiations on the Protocol, Partner States adopted a total of 136 sub-sectors within the seven aforementioned sectors. The breakdown of sub-sectors is as follows: business (46), communications (24), distribution (5), education (5), finance (17), tourism and travel (4), and transport (35). This demonstrated the Partner States commitment to liberalize a broad range of sectors within the East African Community (EAC) through Annex V of the CMP. However, the distribution of sub-sectors within the seven designated sectors seems unbalanced. There is a disproportionate allocation of sub-sectors, with business and communications receiving the majority of commitments, while other sectors such as distribution, education, and tourism seem to have significantly fewer sub-sectors included despite their key roles in the region (EAC, 2009).

Arguably, the allocation of sub-sectors may reflect the comparative advantage and strategic focus of the Partner States. For instance, Partner States might have chosen to prioritize commitments in sectors where they possess a competitive edge or see potential for significant economic growth. This decision could be rationalized by arguing that the goal of liberalization is ultimately to foster economic development and maximize the benefits for all member states.

Participating states must provide services and service suppliers from any other participating state with treatment that is no less favorable than the treatment they provide to their own services and service suppliers, as per Article 17 of the CMP. The positive impact is that it prohibits discrimination based on nationality and requires equal treatment for services and service suppliers

from all participating states. One potential critique of the provision in Article 17 is that it may limit the ability of participating states to enact measures that are intended to protect their own domestic services and service suppliers. For example, some might argue that by requiring equal treatment for Kenyan tourism services and service suppliers, participating states may be prevented from implementing policies to support and promote their own domestic industries, potentially leading to a loss of competitive advantage (EAC, 2022).

Refutation to this critique could emphasize the potential benefits of promoting fair competition and the overall welfare gains from the increased access to a wider range of services and service suppliers. Kenyans argue that by Tanzania providing non-discriminatory treatment to EAC partner states tourism service providers, this policy would create an environment that encourages innovation, efficiency, and ultimately benefits tourists through greater choice and potentially lower prices. They highlight the importance of regional cooperation and the reciprocation of fair treatment in creating a level playing field for all tourism service providers, which could ultimately lead to a more efficient and robust regional tourism sector.

Article 18 of the CMP further requires participating states to treat services and service suppliers of other participating states no less favorably than they treat those from any third party or customs territory. This means that one participating state cannot give preferential treatment to a specific participating state without extending the same treatment to all other participating states.

The principle outlined in Article 18 of the agreement seems to promote fair and equal treatment among participating states in terms of services and service suppliers. However, critics may argue that this principle could hinder a state's ability to negotiate advantageous trade deals with specific partners. In an interconnected global economy, some may argue that the ability to provide preferential treatment to certain participating states could be a strategic tool for fostering strong bilateral relationships and advancing specific economic or diplomatic goals. Preferential treatment may incentivize participating states to prioritize and invest in deeper economic and political relationships with one another, thus fostering faster regional integration (EAC, 2022).

Additionally, the Common Market Protocol (CMP) allows participating states to implement new measures under special circumstances, as long as these measures are not arbitrary, do not discriminate against nationals of other East African Community (EAC) partner states, and do not act as disguised restrictions on free trade in services. However, the requirement that these measures should not be arbitrary, should not discriminate against nationals of other East African Community (EAC) partner states, and should not act as disguised restrictions on free trade in services may pose challenges in practice. For example, determining whether a measure is arbitrary or not can be subjective and may lead to differing interpretations. Additionally, ensuring that measures do not discriminate against nationals of other EAC partner states can be complex, especially in cases where the impact on foreign nationals is indirect. Moreover, identifying disguised restrictions on

free trade in services may require comprehensive evaluations of the measures' effects, which could be resource-intensive for participating states. These complexities highlight the need for clear guidelines and mechanisms to effectively implement and monitor the application of new measures under the CMP.

The other focus of this study on trade integration includes Article 10 of the CMP and the regulations for the East African Community Common Market (Free Movement of Workers) as outlined in Annex II to the CMP. These regulations stipulate the free movement of workers within the Community. This article mandates Partner States to ensure the unrestricted movement of workers who are citizens of other Partner States within their territories. It also requires the Partner States to prevent discrimination against workers from other Partner States based on their nationalities, particularly in terms of employment, remuneration, and other work-related conditions. This study specifically examines the entitlement of EAC citizens to move freely within Partner States for employment purposes (EAC, 2024b).

By facilitating easier movement of workers within the Community, there is a potential for increased economic activity and job opportunities, which can contribute to the growth of the tourism sector. Moreover, with easier movement of workers, the tourism industry may be able to attract and retain a more skilled and diverse workforce, thereby enhancing the overall quality of tourism services in the region. However, some may argue that the free movement of workers could result in increased competition for jobs within the tourism sector, potentially leading to challenges in the employment market for local workers. Additionally, concerns about potential strains on local infrastructure and public services due to an influx of foreign workers may arise.

Trade facilitation measures in regional integration agreements and protocols can reduce operating and transaction costs for the tourism sector. This applies to both the supply side for tourism business operators and the demand side for tourists traveling to the region. An excellent example of regional cooperation in Africa is the East African Tourist Visa within the EAC. This visa allows foreign travelers to move between Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda on a single multi-entry visa, which stimulates tourism demand across all three countries and creates opportunities for tour operators to develop regional tourism packages. Achieve Global Safaris currently offers safari tours combining Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, allowing the company to provide a unique product and differentiate itself from competitors while targeting high-end niche consumers (Bolaky, 2019).

The viability and success of a common market relies heavily on the ability of its members to maintain peaceful relations. This assertion is particularly pertinent in the context of several African regions that have been marred by wars and conflicts, leading to the devastation of crucial infrastructure such as transport networks and communication systems. In order for a common market to function effectively, it is imperative that these conflicts are peacefully resolved. The interconnectedness of a common market necessitates stable and secure conditions for trade and economic activities to thrive (Scharpf, 2010). However, the prevalence of wars and conflicts in

various African regions undermines the fundamental prerequisites for a functional common market. The impact of these conflicts extends beyond the immediate human and economic toll, disrupting essential infrastructure that is vital for facilitating trade and commerce. By resolving conflicts and working towards sustainable peace, the members of a common market can create a more favorable landscape for economic integration and shared prosperity.

On the other hand, it is important to consider that trade integration within the East African Community (EAC) may not exclusively result in positive outcomes for the region's tourism sector. It is argued that significant investments in trade-related infrastructure projects may lead to environmental concerns such as deforestation, habitat destruction, and increased pollution, which could negatively impact the natural attractions that are integral to the tourism industry in the East African region (Murshed et al., 2020). Furthermore, the construction and maintenance of transportation networks, including roads, railways, and airports, could potentially disrupt local ecosystems and wildlife habitats, thereby diminishing the appeal of the region as a tourist destination.

The potential socio-economic impacts of trade integration on local communities should be considered. While improved infrastructure and communication networks can enhance travel convenience for tourists, there is a risk that the development may disproportionately benefit certain areas or demographics, leading to social inequality and displacement of local populations (Murshed et al., 2020). This could have adverse effects on the authenticity and cultural richness that tourists seek when visiting the East African region.

Critics of the harmonized policies and standards in the East African Community (EAC) may argue that while the single tourist visa simplifies travel logistics, it also raises concerns about security and immigration control (Koslowski, 2014). Allowing travelers to visit multiple EAC countries with one visa may pose challenges in terms of monitoring and regulating the movements of individuals across borders, potentially making it easier for unlawful activities to occur undetected. Furthermore, skeptics may question the efficacy of harmonized regulatory standards in the hospitality industry, pointing out that overly standardized regulations may stifle innovation and local distinctiveness. This homogenization of service quality could potentially detract from the unique offerings of each EAC country, resulting in a loss of cultural authenticity and diversity, which are often valued by tourists.

Although trade integration offers opportunities for joint marketing initiatives and create a unified image of the region as a tourism destination, there are potential challenges that need to be considered. Firstly, differences in tourism infrastructure, regulations, and cultural practices among member states may present obstacles to creating a seamless, unified experience for visitors. Additionally, unequal distribution of marketing resources and differing levels of commitment among member states could lead to disparities in the promotion of the region, ultimately impacting the effectiveness of joint marketing efforts (Murshed et al., 2020).

Similarly, while trade integration may attract increased investments in tourism infrastructure, it could also lead to concerns regarding the potential exploitation of local resources and communities by foreign investors. Furthermore, the influx of foreign investments may result in urbanization and environmental degradation in certain areas, which could lead to a loss of authenticity and cultural heritage, ultimately impacting the region's appeal to tourists. Likewise, intra-regional investments may not be evenly distributed, potentially exacerbating existing economic disparities within the region (EAC, 2025a).

It is true that economic growth from trade can increase disposable income and foster a domestic tourism market, it is important to consider potential drawbacks. Increased wealth from economic integration may also lead to rising living costs, which could make domestic tourism less affordable for local populations (Khalid et al., 2022). The problem with that is that EAC will continue relying on international tourism, which is susceptible to travel advisories and other international shocks such as financial crisis, international politics and pandemics in the source markets. Additionally, economic and political stability resulting from integration may not always guarantee safety for international tourists, as it is possible for regions to experience economic growth and stability while still facing safety concerns due to other factors such as social unrest or crime.

Trade integration may promote cultural exchange and the development of regional cultural festivals. This calls for consideration on the potential negative impact of commercialization and homogenization of cultures. Increased tourism and commercial interests can sometimes lead to the dilution and distortion of traditional cultural practices and values. Furthermore, overemphasis on attracting tourists to cultural events may shift the focus from the authentic portrayal of local traditions to a more commercialized and stereotypical representation (Gogo & Masaki, 2022).

Additionally, the collaborative efforts to preserve and promote cultural and natural heritage sites may inadvertently lead to overcrowding and degradation of these sites. The influx of visitors interested in history and nature can put excessive strain on fragile ecosystems and heritage structures, leading to environmental degradation and loss of historical authenticity. Therefore, it is essential to implement sustainable tourism strategies and responsible cultural promotion to mitigate these potential negative consequences and ensure the long-term preservation and authenticity of cultural festivals and heritage sites (Gogo & Masaki, 2022).

The influence of trade integration through business tourism has been challenged with the uptake of online meetings. It is argued that the increased focus on virtual conferences and online trade fairs due to technological advancements may reduce the necessity for physical attendance at such events (Khalid et al., 2022). The convenience and cost-effectiveness of virtual participation could potentially minimize the need for extensive business-related travel, thereby affecting the projected contribution of conferences and trade fairs to the tourism sector. Additionally, the environmental

impact of extensive business travel, particularly air travel, is a cause for concern and may serve as a deterrent to the growth of this sector. Furthermore, geopolitical tensions and unforeseen economic downturns in certain regions may hinder the anticipated benefits of regional trade integration, consequently affecting the attraction of international participants to the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) sector.

In terms of economies of scale, there are drawbacks such as the monopolistic power of large integrated entities, which may lead to reduced competition and innovation. An example could be that coordinating EAC marketing from Arusha will exclude the creativity of stakeholders; those located at the local level. Trying to incorporate their ideas may result in cost inefficiencies due to the challenges of coordinating and managing larger, more complex operations. Moreover, cooperative pricing among partner states may face challenges in terms of enforcement and fair distribution of benefits, potentially leading to market distortions and conflicts among stakeholders.

Trade integration allows for the development of multi-destination tourism packages, and this may present challenges in terms of coordination among the involved countries. The varying regulations, infrastructure, and tourism policies in each country may lead to difficulties in ensuring a smooth and coherent experience for tourists traveling across multiple destinations. A case in point is the contradiction on sport hunting between Kenya and Tanzania; the former banned sport hunting in 1977, while the latter has legalized sport hunting. So the animals are conserved in Kenya, but killed for a fee when they cross the border into Tanzania. Additionally, differences in currency, language, and cultural norms can pose communication barriers and logistical challenges for tourists and tour operators alike, thereby potentially limiting the appeal of multi-destination packages.

Furthermore, while the prospect of visiting shared natural attractions without complicated border procedures is indeed appealing, concerns may arise regarding the potential impact on the ecosystems and local communities. The increased influx of tourists facilitated by simplified border crossings may put undue strain on the natural environment and wildlife, leading to preservation and conservation challenges. Moreover, the unregulated movement of tourists across shared attractions could potentially exacerbate issues such as habitat disturbance and disruption of local ecosystems, raising questions about the sustainability of such initiatives (Koslowski, 2014).

## **2.5 Political Integration**

The Political Federation is the ultimate goal of the EAC Regional Integration, representing the fourth step after the Customs Union, Common Market, and Monetary Union. It is outlined in Article 5(2) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. Although progress has been slow, the EAC Heads of State made a resolution at a Special Summit in Nairobi in August 2004 to explore ways to expedite the process through a fast-track Mechanism. This led to the establishment of the Wako Committee, assigned to conduct comprehensive consultations and finalize the work on the Political Federation (East African Community, 2013).

In response to the consultative process, the office of Deputy Secretary-General responsible for the Political Federation was established in 2006 to oversee this process. From 2004 onwards, the EAC has been implementing various initiatives to accelerate political integration. This has involved summit directives, national consultations with stakeholders between 2006 and 2008, and several studies to facilitate and accelerate the process. On May 20th, 2017, the EAC Heads of State adopted the Political Confederation as a transitional model of the East African Political Federation (EAC, 2025d)

The difference is that a confederation is a union of sovereign states that have agreed to delegate certain powers, such as defense or foreign affairs, to a central authority while retaining their independence. In a confederation, the central authority's powers are limited to those specifically granted to it by the member states, and the member states have the primary authority. On the other hand, a federal government is a system in which power is divided between a central authority and its constituent states or regions. In a federal system, both the central government and the regional governments have their own powers and responsibilities, and they coexist within the same political framework (EAC, 2025c).

### **2.5.1 What is the structure of the East African Community?**

International law scholars classify international organizations into intergovernmental organizations and supranational organizations based on the dynamic interplay between state sovereignty and the functions delegated to the organization by member states. Both types of organizations play an important role in shaping international relations, yet they operate on fundamentally different principles.

Supranational institutions are organizations created by sovereign states with the power to make and enforce decisions that member states must adhere to. These institutions go beyond national borders and have a level of independence and authority that can, in some cases, override national laws and regulations. Key features include majority voting procedures, centralized decision-making, and the ability to levy sanctions or penalties on member states. In contrast, Intergovernmental institutions are organizations in which member states collaborate on specific issues while maintaining their sovereignty. Decisions within these institutions are usually reached through consensus or unanimity, ensuring that no member state is obligated to abide by a decision without its explicit consent. These institutions promote cooperation and coordination among states without encroaching on their sovereignty (Cafaro, 2017).

In terms of decision-making, supranational organizations frequently utilize majority-voting systems, whereby decisions are reached based on a qualified majority rather than requiring unanimity. While this approach facilitates more streamlined decision-making processes, it can result in scenarios where certain member states are obliged to comply with decisions that they did not endorse. Notable instances of this practice can be observed within the European Union (EU)

and its governing bodies such as the European Parliament and the European Commission. In contrast, Intergovernmental institutions utilize a consensus or unanimity-based approach for decision-making, ensuring that all member states are in agreement with the outcomes. This method is commonly observed in organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), where each member state holds veto power, especially in critical areas like security and defense (Vaubel, 2013).

This makes the EAC an intergovernmental institution because it utilizes the consensus-based approach. The consensus-based approach to decision making has a notable impact on tourism management in the region. By prioritizing consensus and general agreement among member states, this approach promotes a cooperative and inclusive environment for developing and implementing tourism policies. It allows for the incorporation of diverse perspectives and aligns decision-making processes with the unique needs and priorities of individual member states, potentially leading to more balanced and equitable tourism management strategies.

However, many critics have expressed exasperation with the consensus-based approach due to slow decision-making processes, as accommodating diverse viewpoints and reaching unanimous agreement may be time-consuming. They argue that the emphasis on consensus could potentially impede the implementation of innovative or progressive tourism management initiatives, as compromise and unanimity may prioritize maintaining the status quo over enacting impactful changes. Nevertheless, proponents of the consensus-based approach counter these arguments by emphasizing that the inclusive nature of this decision-making process fosters greater ownership and commitment to implemented policies, ultimately leading to more sustainable and harmonious tourism management practices across the diverse East African Community member states.

In terms of authority and autonomy, supranational institutions possess a greater level of authority and independence. They have the power to enforce regulations and directives that member states are required to adhere to, occasionally superseding national laws. For example, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) is empowered to interpret EU law and guarantee its consistent application throughout all member states. Intergovernmental institutions lack inherent authority and instead function based on agreements and treaties that necessitate voluntary compliance from member states. Their primary role is advisory and coordinative, rather than authoritative. For instance, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) exemplify this dynamic, where policies and rules are established through negotiation and consensus, with enforcement heavily reliant on member states' cooperation (Cafaro, 2017).

The lack of inherent authority within the EAC has significant implications for tourism management in the region. One of the key challenges is the difficulty in enforcing uniform policies and regulations across the partner states. This leads to inconsistencies in standards across different member countries, affecting the overall visitor experience and potentially affecting the perception

of the EAC as a cohesive tourism destination. Without authoritative powers, the EAC struggles to effectively address cross-border issues such as wildlife conservation, especially between Kenya and Tanzania (Mwakio, 2013).

Supranational institutions have the potential to diminish state sovereignty as member states relinquish some level of control over specific policy areas. The delegation of decision-making authority to a central body may require national governments to execute policies that they did not autonomously select (Martin Martinez, 1996). This dynamic is evident in the economic and monetary union of the EU, where member states have constrained influence over their monetary policies. Intergovernmental institutions uphold state sovereignty by mandating that every decision must receive explicit consent from all member states. This approach allows states to maintain complete control over their policies and to withdraw from decisions or agreements that do not serve their national interests. While this commitment to sovereignty may lead to slower decision-making, it guarantees that all member states are regarded as equal partners.

The requirement for explicit consent of decisions from all member states in the East African Community has significant implications for tourism management in the region. On one hand, this policy ensures that decisions related to tourism initiatives and management cannot be unilaterally imposed on any member state, thereby respecting the sovereignty of each nation. It allows for a balanced and inclusive approach to tourism development, taking into account the diverse needs and concerns of each country within the community. By prioritizing explicit consent, the EAC aims to maintain harmonious and cooperative relationships among its member states, which can contribute to sustainable and mutually beneficial tourism practices. However, some rebuttals may arise. Critics might argue that this requirement could lead to delays in decision-making processes, hindering the implementation of timely and effective tourism strategies. The need for unanimous consent could potentially result in watered-down policies that fail to address pressing regional or cross-border tourism challenges. Moreover, ensuring unanimous consent from all member states may prove to be overly cumbersome and may impede the EAC's ability to act decisively in rapidly evolving tourism landscapes.

The answer to the question posed is that the East African Community (EAC) is an intergovernmental institution with several challenges. The debate surrounding decision making by consensus, partner states' autonomy and sovereignty, and giving the Secretariat powers to make it a supranational institution highlights the complexities involved in effectively managing the EAC. It is necessary for the EAC to carefully consider these challenges and find a balanced approach that aligns with the vision outlined in Article 5(2) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. Alternatively, the EAC could potentially benefit from increasing the utilization of variable geometry and variable speed in its decision-making processes.

## Variable Geometry and Variable Speed in the EAC Regional Integration

Understanding the concepts of variable geometry and variable speed is crucial when examining regional integration processes and their impact on sectors such as tourism management in the East African Community (EAC). Variable geometry pertains to situations where sub-groups of members, and potentially different sub-groups for different issues, seek to engage in deeper and more intensive forms of integration and collaboration on specific matters, while other members prefer to remain outside these initiatives permanently (Holzinger & Schimmelfennig, 2012). It allows for a flexible approach to integration. This approach enables subsets of countries within a regional bloc to pursue deeper integration in specific areas, while others may choose not to participate at all. This concept allows for a multi-speed and multi-level integration process, where countries can opt to join specific projects or policies based on their capabilities and interests.

The concept of variable geometry in the East African Community (EAC) is exemplified by the agreement signed by Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, known as the 'coalition of the willing', to implement the Single East African Tourist Visa. This visa allows tourists to travel within these three countries for 90 days. However, the visa becomes invalid once the tourists cross into Tanzania, as Tanzania chose not to participate in the agreement due to concerns about potential loss of visa revenue.

On the other hand, variable speed refers to a scenario in which all members agree to common aims or objectives, but some members are allowed a longer timeframe to achieve these objectives (Holzinger & Schimmelfennig, 2012). Instead of slowing down everyone to accommodate the slowest member state's integration pace, some members can progress towards a common policy, while others can catch up when they are ready. Variable speed pertains to the idea that different countries or entities within a regional bloc may advance towards integration at different rates, and recognizes that not all member states may be prepared or inclined to integrate at the same pace due to variations in economic development, political readiness, infrastructure, and other factors. As a result, countries can choose to engage in specific integration initiatives at different times, allowing for a more flexible and adaptable integration process. An illustration of variable speed can be observed in the case of South Sudan and Burundi, both of which have indicated their desire to participate in the coalition of the willing. They are permitted to join at their own pace, aligning with their individual readiness.

The principle of variable geometry, as outlined in Article 7 (e) of the EAC Treaty, refers to "the principle of flexibility which allows for progression in co-operation among a sub-group of members in a larger integration scheme in a variety of areas and at different speeds" (EAC, 2006). Even so, the implementation is indeed quite challenging and has previously been subject to legal proceedings. Advisory opinion No.1 of 2008 was sought by the council of ministers of the East African Community to obtain clarification from the East African Court of Justice on two issues.

The first issue concerned whether variable geometry could be applied to the community's integration process, while the second issue was whether consensus in decision-making equated to unanimity. In its ruling, the court clarified that variable geometry can be a strategy for implementation that aligns with the requirement for consensus in decision-making when applied appropriately. However, it emphasized that variable geometry is not a decision-making tool in itself and should be utilized as an exception rather than a rule. The court advised that the Partner States should reach an agreement on the areas where this principle can and cannot apply, as simultaneous implementation may not be feasible in certain circumstances. Therefore, it cautioned against a one-size-fits-all approach and recommended that the principle be applied judiciously to guide the integration process (EACJ, 2018).

Application of variable geometry within the East African Community has the potential to enhance tourism management by facilitating improved connectivity. For example, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda are actively working to enhance the railway line from Mombasa to Kigali. This endeavor could lead to the creation of a shared wildlife tourism circuit, fostering a more interconnected and competitive tourism market. Additionally, it has the potential to diversify the region's tourism offerings, attract a broader spectrum of tourists, and potentially alleviate seasonality in specific destinations. This collaborative effort could also elevate the overall appeal of the EAC as a tourism destination, benefiting all member countries in the long run. However, there are also potential criticisms to consider. Some critics like Tanzania argue that such partnerships could lead to uneven distribution of benefits among member countries, with certain destinations or countries receiving a disproportionate share of the economic gains (Mathieson, 2016).

In terms of variable speed, the differential development of tourism infrastructure within the East African Community (EAC) has significant implications for tourism management. Firstly, countries with advanced infrastructure, such as Kenya and Tanzania, may attract a disproportionate number of tourists, leading to an imbalance in tourism activities within the region. This could potentially marginalize other member states that are unable to keep pace with infrastructure development. The uneven distribution of tourism traffic may exacerbate the strain on existing resources and impact the overall sustainability of tourism in the region. This may contribute to social and cultural challenges, such as the erosion of traditional practices and the commodification of local culture to cater to tourist expectations. As a result, the authenticity and uniqueness of the tourism experience in the region may be compromised. However, rebuttals for such arguments submit that shared promotional efforts and regional collaboration could mitigate the negative effects of uneven infrastructure development, fostering a more integrated and sustainable approach to tourism management within the EAC.

Generally, intergovernmentalism is characterized by a lack of shared sovereignty, allowing each member state to effectively retain veto power over regional agreement applications (Cafaro, 2017). It necessitates close coordination of national policies and typically involves intergovernmental

bodies with a secretariat that lacks independent power. One drawback of intergovernmental bodies is the absence of enforcement mechanisms to ensure state compliance with common rules. The other drawback is that advancement depends on the speed of the slowest member. This becomes especially challenging as integration expands, making it harder to reach consensus on deepening integration, particularly in larger regional trade agreements.

The application of variable geometry is highly relevant in the context of binding organic acts, where supranational institutions are involved. In the case of intergovernmental organizations such as the EAC, the assessment of variable geometry only considers forms of association that adopt binding (conventional and/or organic) acts. This usually involves a thorough analysis of their statutory provisions followed by an examination of their practical implementation. The EAC does not have such provisions as indicated by the EACJ ruling that was cited above. A comparison of their legal agreements shows that they generally do not address the concept of variable geometry or regulate its application, due to varied interests that might be categorized under horizontal versus vertical integration.

The discussion on horizontal versus vertical integration, also known as widening versus deepening integration, continues within the EU. The argument is that by widening and adding more nation states (horizontal integration), the EU becomes more heterogeneous, which could make decision-making more challenging (Holzinger & Schimmelfennig, 2012). With a greater number of member states comes diverse opinions, potentially slowing down decision-making processes due to conflicting interests and potentially leading to tension and conflicts. The counterargument to the potential challenges posed by widening integration within the European Union can be found in the principle of unity in diversity. While it is true that adding more nation states may lead to increased heterogeneity, this diversity can also be viewed as a source of strength. The inclusion of diverse perspectives and cultural backgrounds can enrich the decision-making process by offering a more comprehensive understanding of various issues. In this way, a wider range of voices can contribute to more robust and well-rounded policy outcomes.

In the case of the EU, both deepening and widening occurred simultaneously. The history of the EU shows that as more member states joined, it did not hinder the deepening integration of the union. The East African Community (EAC) can draw several valuable lessons from the debate regarding horizontal versus vertical integration within the European Union (EU) and apply them to the management of tourism within the region. That by considering the principles of unity in diversity, the EAC can appreciate the richness that diversity brings to the tourism sector. Just as the inclusion of diverse perspectives and cultural backgrounds enriches the decision-making process in the EU, the EAC can harness the diversity of its partner states to offer a more comprehensive and culturally enriched tourism experience.

Similarly, the EAC can recognize the importance of harmonizing regulatory frameworks and policy coordination, as demonstrated by the EU's emphasis on vertical integration. By aligning

tourism regulations and standards across member states, the EAC can enhance the efficiency of its tourism sector and reduce barriers to travel and tourism activities within the region. This alignment could lead to improved market access for businesses, as well as better resource allocation and decision-making in the tourism industry.

The EAC could pursue a modified EU's example of simultaneous deepening and widening integration. As the EAC continues to expand its membership and deepen its integration, it should ensure that these processes complement rather than hinder each other. This approach can be beneficial for tourism management, as it allows the EAC to capitalize on the advantages of a larger and more diverse pool of resources while fostering greater cooperation and integration in tourism-related policies and activities.

Figure 10: Structure of the EAC.

<b>Organ</b>	<b>Description</b>
The Summit	Comprises the Heads of State or Government of member countries. Offers policy guidance and direction to achieve the Community's goals.
The Council of Ministers	Central decision-making body consisting of Ministers responsible for EAC Affairs. Implements Summit directives and oversees EAC programs.
The Coordinating Committee	Made up of Permanent or Principal Secretaries. Coordinates activities of Sectoral Councils and makes recommendations to the Council of Ministers.
Sectoral Committees	Composed of Ministers overseeing sectors such as trade, health, and infrastructure. Ensures sector efficiency and reports to the Council of Ministers.
The East African Court of Justice	Judicial arm of the EAC. Ensures adherence to the Treaty and resolves disputes between member states.
The East African Legislative Assembly	Legislative body elected by national parliaments. Enacts laws, approves budgets, and advances the legislative agenda of the EAC.
The Secretariat	Executive arm of the EAC led by the Secretary General. Implements decisions, manages daily operations, and safeguards legal instruments of the EAC.

Source: (EAC, 2025c).

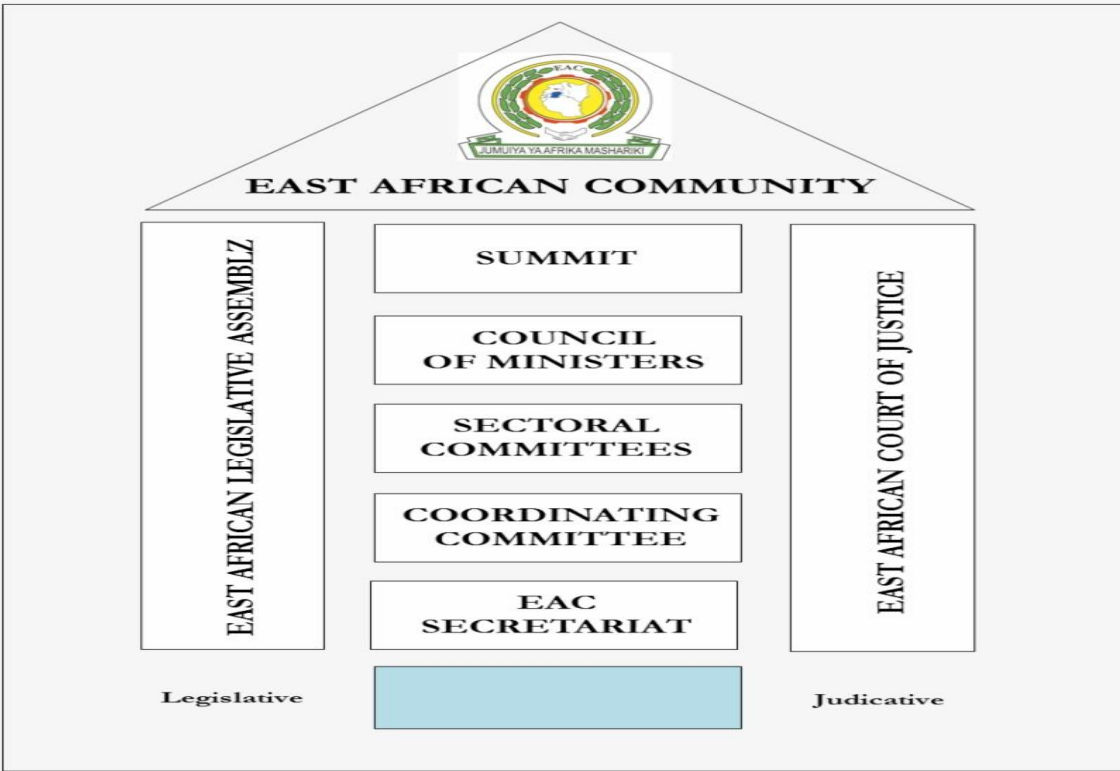


Figure 11: Structure of the East African Community.

Source: (EAC, 2025c)

### 2.5.2 Comparing Regional Tourism Organizations in the EU and EAC

The European Travel Commission (ETC) and the East African Tourism Platform (EATP) are two prominent regional tourism organizations that share the common goal of promoting tourism within their respective regions. While the ETC focuses on promoting Europe as a cohesive tourist destination (ETC, 2025), the EATP endeavors to showcase East Africa as a unified tourist destination. Despite the variations in their geographic scopes, both organizations aim to stimulate tourism and economic development by leveraging the unique attractions and tourism potential of their regions.

One of the key similarities between the ETC and the EATP lies in their emphasis on collaborative marketing strategies. The ETC implements pan-European marketing campaigns to attract visitors from diverse international markets, while the EATP focuses on regional marketing initiatives highlighting the collective attractions of the East African Community (EATP, 2025). Both organizations recognize the value of targeted and collective marketing efforts in promoting the rich cultural, historical, and natural offerings of their regions to potential visitors.

Both organizations prioritize capacity building by offering training programs and workshops to enhance the skills and knowledge of tourism professionals. This common focus underscores the shared commitment of the ETC and the EATP in investing in human capital to elevate the quality of tourism services and experiences within their regions. Furthermore, the ETC and the EATP are actively engaged in advocacy and policy initiatives to influence tourism policies and regulations. The ETC seeks to influence tourism policies at the European level, while the EATP collaborates with East African Community governments to harmonize tourism policies and visa regulations. This common advocacy role demonstrates the role of regional coordination by both organizations to create a conducive policy environment for the sustainable growth of the tourism industry, ((EATP, 2025).

Despite the similarities, the ETC and the EATP also face distinct challenges and opportunities. The ETC has the task of balancing the diverse interests of its member countries, whereas the EATP encounters varying levels of tourism development and political stability among its members. In terms of opportunities, the ETC seeks to capitalize on the established tourism infrastructure in Europe (ETC, 2025), whereas the EATP aims to showcase the unique and diverse attractions of East African Community. These differences in challenges and opportunities are shaped by the specific dynamics and contexts within which each organization operates.

### 2.5.3 Comparison between European Travel Commission and East African Tourism Platform.

*Table 3: Comparison between the European Travel Commission and the East African Tourism Platform*

ASPECT	EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION (ETC)	EAST AFRICA TOURISM PLATFORM (EATP)
<b>TYPE &amp; PURPOSE</b>	International non-profit association promoting Europe as a tourism destination to long-haul markets.	Regional private-sector body promotes East Africa as a unified tourism destination; supports advocacy, marketing, skills development, and regional integration.
<b>MEMBERSHIP / STAKEHOLDERS</b>	National Tourism Organisations from member countries and associate members from the private sector.	Private sector tourism organizations across EAC member states; collaborates with tourism and wildlife ministries, EAC Secretariat, business councils, development partners, businesses, and local communities.
<b>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MECHANISMS</b>	Cooperation through market intelligence, best-practice sharing, research,	Advocacy on issues such as a single tourist visa and open-sky policy; marketing campaigns like Tembea

	publications, webinars, and promotional campaigns.	Nyumbani; capacity building for businesses, youth, women, communities, and tour guides; participation in regional and international tourism expos.
<b>MAIN ACTIVITIES &amp; TOOLS</b>	Market intelligence reports, trend analysis, promotional programmes targeting long-haul markets, advocacy on sustainability and competitiveness.	Policy dialogue and reforms on visa facilitation, taxes, and air connectivity; development of digital platforms such as regional booking portals; marketing campaigns and trade expos; newsletters, directories, and events for members.
<b>GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS</b>	Promotes Europe as a brand for global audiences, particularly in long-haul markets.	Focuses on tourism development and promotion within the East African Community region.
<b>ESTABLISHED SINCE</b>	Founded in 1948.	Established in 2011 and operational from 2012.

Source: (ETC, 2025) & (EATP, 2025).

## 2.6 Theoretical Framework

### 2.6.1 Developmental Regionalism

The East African Community has fragmented policies when it comes to the implementation of the treaty, which makes place based theories unsuitable. Developmental regionalism in tourism management involves a collaborative approach to harmonize these fragmentations, to improve tourism activities in the region. This approach recognizes the significant role of tourism in driving economic growth, cultural exchange, and societal advancement. By focusing on the collective development of tourism, it acknowledges the interconnectedness of various localities within a region and underscores the importance of coordinated efforts and joint initiatives among different stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, community organizations, and tourism authorities. Through collaboration and synergy, developmental regionalism aims to maximize the overall impact of tourism on the region's economic and social framework (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2017).

In essence, developmental regionalism underscores the importance of holistic and inclusive development strategies that consider the diverse needs and aspirations of local communities. It goes beyond the traditional focus on individual tourism sites and attractions, aiming to promote balanced and equitable growth across the entire region. This approach aligns with the principles of sustainable tourism, emphasizing the preservation of cultural heritage, environmental conservation, and the empowerment of residents.

The implementation of developmental regionalism involves a variety of mechanisms that differ across regions but generally include trade liberalization, infrastructure development, policy

coordination, and institutional strengthening. Trade liberalization within a regional tourism framework has the potential to create larger markets, attract foreign direct investment, and foster competitive tour services. This is evident in the success of regional tourism agreements such as the European Union, under the European Travel Commission, which have resulted in increased tourism business across member states and attracted foreign investment, contributing to economic growth and development (Barišić & Cvetkoska, 2020). Similar benefits are witnessed in infrastructure development, particularly in transport and energy, which plays a crucial role in reducing transaction costs and enhancing connectivity within regions. For example, the development of transportation networks and energy infrastructure in the ASEAN region has facilitated the movement of goods and people, promoting economic integration and tourism growth (Gonçalves et al., 2022).

Policy coordination is another key mechanism of implementing developmental regionalism in tourism management. This involves the alignment of tourism regulatory frameworks, and development strategies among member states (Barišić & Cvetkoska, 2020) The East African Community has made efforts to coordinate policies related to tourism and wildlife, trade integration, and infrastructure development, aiming to create a conducive environment for economic growth and development across the region.

Moreover, institutional strengthening is essential to ensure that regional bodies have the capacity and authority to effectively implement and monitor regional initiatives. The success of the European Union in implementing regional policies and regulations demonstrates the importance of strong institutional frameworks in promoting developmental regionalism (Barišić & Cvetkoska, 2020). This is not the case in EAC, which still operates under a Secretariat, with limited powers to enforce compliance of agreements.

Empirical studies on developmental regionalism present a complex picture, with outcomes varying across different regional contexts. In East Asia, regional cooperation has played a significant role in fostering economic growth and development. The gradual integration and non-interference approach characterizing the ASEAN model have contributed to industrial growth, technological advancement, and poverty reduction in the region (Gonçalves et al., 2022). This suggests that a carefully calibrated and gradual approach to integration, coupled with respect for national sovereignty, can yield positive developmental outcomes.

Conversely, in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, the outcomes of developmental regionalism have been less pronounced. Political instability, inadequate infrastructure, and weak institutional capacities have hindered the potential benefits of regional cooperation in driving economic development. Despite these challenges, recent initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) signal a renewed commitment to leveraging regionalism for development. This

demonstrates an acknowledgment of the potential benefits of regional integration in addressing the developmental challenges facing the region (Zajontz & Leysens, 2015).

The concept of developmental regionalism is deeply rooted in the belief that regional integration can act as a catalyst for overall development (Nyadera et al., 2022). This perspective draws heavily from the influential works of scholars such as Gunnar Myrdal and Raul Prebisch. Myrdal's theory of cumulative causation and Prebisch's structuralist approach both advocate for the idea that regional cooperation has the potential to overcome the constraints imposed by global market structures on developing nations. According to these theories, regional integration can play a crucial role in fostering economic diversification, driving industrialization, and reducing the dependence of developing countries on primary commodities. It is important to note that these integration efforts are not solely driven by market forces, but are viewed as a coordinated endeavor aimed at achieving developmental objectives through collective action and policy harmonization.

Myrdal's cumulative causation theory posits that economic activities tend to cluster and reinforce each other in specific regions, leading to the perpetuation and amplification of development disparities. This theory underscores the significance of targeted regional policies and interventions to break the cycle of underdevelopment and stimulate balanced growth (Westlund, 2020). Similarly, Prebisch's structuralist approach highlights the uneven distribution of economic gains within the global market, particularly disadvantaging developing economies. By advocating for regional integration, Prebisch proposes a strategy to mitigate these inherent structural inequalities and promote more equitable development trajectories (Bracarense, 2024).

Criticisms of developmental regionalism have been the lack of political will and commitment among member states, which often results in the poor implementation of regional agreements (Söderbaum, 2016). This hinders the effective realization of the intended benefits of regional cooperation and integration. Critics of developmental regionalism also argue that regional integration efforts may conflict with multilateralism and global integration initiatives, potentially leading to trade diversion and inefficiencies. The fear is that prioritizing regional interests over global cooperation may hinder broader economic progress and development (Kang, 2016). This raises questions about the compatibility and potential trade-offs between regionalism and global integration efforts, highlighting the need for careful consideration and strategic alignment of policies and initiatives.

Another significant concern with developmental regionalism is the uneven distribution of benefits among member states, which can exacerbate regional inequalities. This issue poses a threat to the overall stability and sustainability of regional integration efforts, as disparities in benefits can lead to tensions and conflicts among member states. Furthermore, the dominance of more developed countries within a regional bloc can contribute to the marginalization of less developed members,

perpetuating existing economic disparities and hindering inclusive growth and development (J. Harrison, 2006).

Addressing these challenges requires the establishment of robust governance structures, equitable policies, and mechanisms to ensure inclusive participation and benefit-sharing. Without effective governance mechanisms and equitable policies in place, developmental regionalism runs the risk of perpetuating existing inequalities and failing to deliver on its potential for driving inclusive economic growth and development. Inclusive participation and benefit-sharing are essential for ensuring that the benefits of regional integration are equitably distributed among member states, ultimately contributing to the overall stability and sustainability of regional cooperation efforts (Dent, 2008).

It is evident that while developmental regionalism has yielded positive outcomes in certain regions, its impact has been constrained in others due to a range of factors. The case of EU and East Asia highlights the potential for regional integration to drive tourism progress, while the challenges faced in Sub-Saharan Africa underscore the importance of addressing issues such as political instability and infrastructure deficits to fully realize the benefits of regionalism on tourism. The emergence of initiatives like AfCFTA indicates a continued belief in the potential of regional integration to contribute to development, underlining the need for tailored approaches that account for the unique circumstances of each region.

## **3 CHAPTER 3: MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **3.1 Study Area**

#### **3.1.1 Geographical Location and Climate**

The East African Community (EAC) is a regional intergovernmental organization consisting of eight countries in East Africa: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the new member Somalia. These countries boast diverse geographical locations and climates, featuring a variety of landscapes and weather patterns.

The EAC encompasses a wide range of climatic conditions due to its diverse geographical landscape. The region experiences various climate types, including equatorial, tropical savanna, semi-arid and arid, highland, and coastal climates. The equatorial climate prevails in areas near the equator, such as parts of Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Somalia. It is characterized by a tropical rainforest climate with high humidity and significant rainfall throughout the year. The tropical savanna climate is predominant in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, and parts of Somalia. This climate type is distinguished by distinct wet and dry seasons, with the wet season bringing heavy rains and the dry season exhibiting arid conditions. Semi-arid and arid climates are found in northern Kenya, eastern Tanzania, and some parts of Somalia. These regions encounter low rainfall and high temperatures, rendering them susceptible to droughts (Mukhala et al., 2017)

Highland areas, present in Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of Kenya, Tanzania, and Somalia, exhibit cooler temperatures and consistent rainfall, offering favorable conditions for agricultural activities. The coastal climate along the Indian Ocean coastline, particularly in Kenya, Tanzania, and Somalia, is tropical with high temperatures, humidity, and significant rainfall influenced by the monsoon winds (Kaba, 2024). These diverse climates and geographical features within the EAC significantly contribute to its rich biodiversity and varied agricultural potential, ultimately shaping the livelihoods and cultures of the inhabitants of the region.

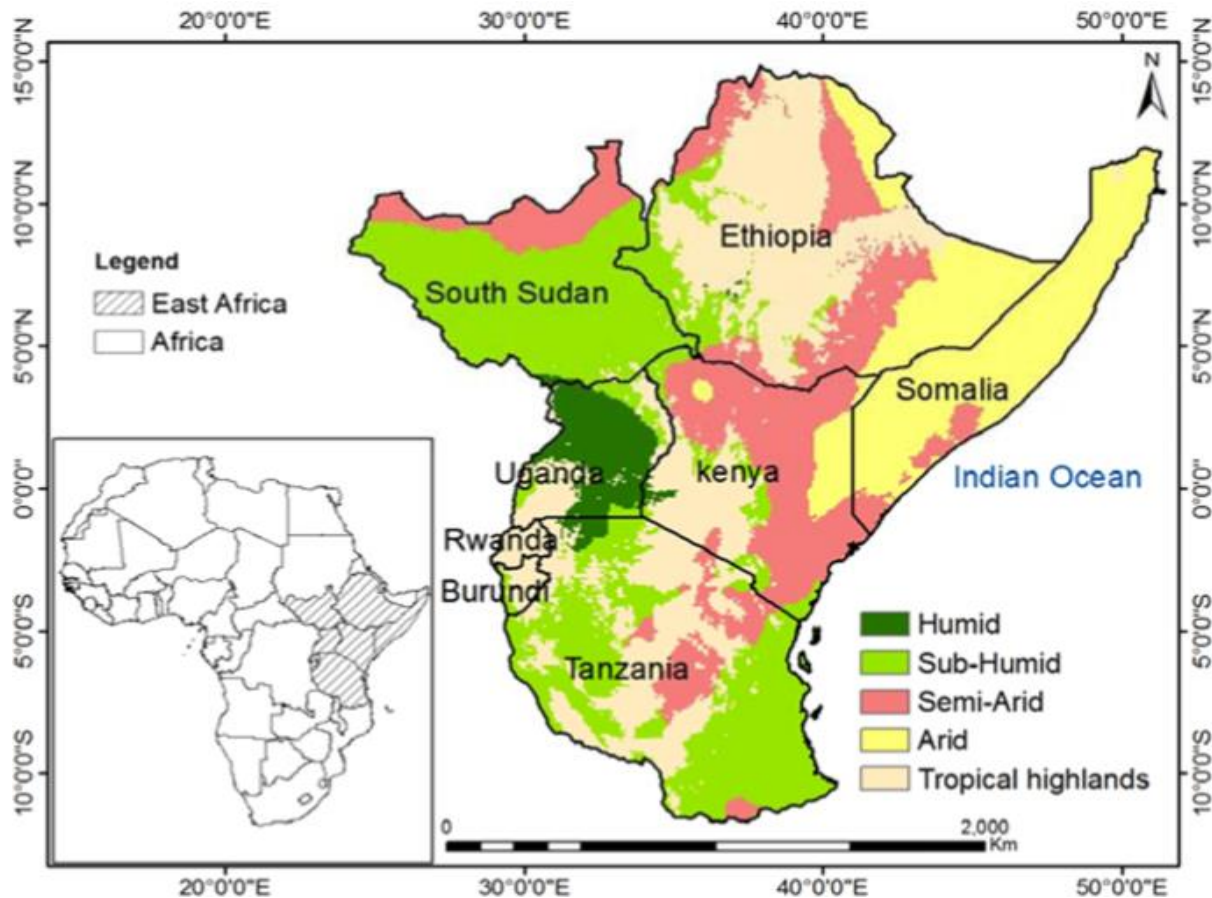


Table 4: Climate around EAC. Source: (World Bank, 2011)

### 3.1.2 History of the EAC

The East African Community is home to approximately 323,768,663 million people and spans a land area of 5,422,924 square kilometers. The community comprises eight countries with a combined GDP of USD \$332.5 billion (World Bank, 2024), and eight different currencies of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, and Tanzania. The EAC headquarters is situated in Arusha, Tanzania, which was chosen to decentralize EAC services historically headquartered in Nairobi by the British. Arusha was also selected for its central location among the three founding members - Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (EAC, 2022b).

The EAC Secretariat is led by a Secretary General who serves a non-renewable five-year term to ensure rotational representation of each partner state. The current Secretary General is Ms. Veronica Mueni Nduva from the Republic of Kenya. Ms. Nduva assumed the role after Dr. Peter Mathuki was recalled by the Kenyan government in March 2024, two years before the end of his tenure, and redeployed as the country's ambassador to Russia (Anami, 2024). Legal challenges have been raised against his removal, stating that Kenya's unilateral decision violated the spirit of the EAC Treaty, which requires consultation with the Summit for the appointment of the SG and

a six-month notice, It was reported that Kenya initially nominated Caroline Mwendu Mueke before ultimately unveiling Ms. Nduva. An observable trend is that all three individuals, Mathuki, Mueke, and Nduva, are from the Kamba tribe of Kenya (Anami, 2024). These developments highlight internal disputes within the EAC and a tribal focus for Kenya in the nomination process.

Cooperation in East Africa has developed as a result of historical events, beginning with Uganda and Kenya, followed by Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania being under the same colonial power. This led to the establishment of a unified railway system, post office, and airline, fostering closer ties and increased mobility, especially in trade. It began with the 1901 construction of the Kenya Uganda railway line (iron snake), followed by the signing of a customs union in 1917 between Kenya and Uganda. This customs union included agreements on common currency (the East African Shilling), postage, and a common external tariff. After the League of Nations in 1919, following the defeat of Germany during World War I, Tanganyika was handed over by the Germans as a mandated territory to the British. Subsequently in 1927, Tanganyika (now part of the United Republic of Tanzania after forming a union with Zanzibar in 1964) joined Kenya and Uganda customs union, and then formed East African High Commission in 1948. Prior to this, the union between the three countries was not legally recognized. (Sebalu, 1972). It only existed as an informal administrative arrangement to save administrative costs, which was by then footed by the British taxpayers. As a result, Sebalu (1972) elucidates that the East African High Commission clothed this union with some form of legal framework, managing East African Airways, East African Fisheries Research Organisation, East African Literature Bureau, East African Income Tax Board, and the East African Railways and Harbor Services.

This lasted until 1961, when Tanganyika attained its independence. One year later, Uganda attained independence in 1962, followed by Kenya in 1963. This meant that East African states had to take over management of the union. They thereupon supplanted the East African High Commission with the East African Common Services Organization to disassociate with their colonial rulers. The East African Common Services Organisation (EACSO) lasted from 1961 to 1967. The East African Cooperation was then established on December 1st, 1967, marking the third effort to sustain East African integration after the dissolution of EACSO (AU, 2019).

The late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who served as the President of Tanzania, was a proponent of cooperation between Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, citing their shared history of collaboration during colonial times. He advocated for a Political Federation and even expressed willingness to postpone Tanganyika's independence to pursue this vision. Furthermore, he suggested that Jomo Kenyatta should assume the role of the First President of the Federation, considering his seniority among the presidents. However, leaders in Uganda and Kenya lost interest in political federation after gaining independence (Sebalu, 1972). More than six decades later, Kenya and Uganda have displayed a stronger enthusiasm towards establishing a Federation, while Tanzania has become a hesitant partner. The region was on the verge of forming a Federation but missed the opportunity, making it more challenging to achieve now.

The community encountered a myriad of challenges, which they took in stride and later strengthened the union in 1967 by signing a Treaty of East African Cooperation. However, 10 years down the line, in 1977, the Cooperation disintegrated due to several challenges including the overthrow of Dr. Milton Obote. This occurred when the then President Obote was on an official visit to Singapore attending a common wealth conference in January 1971, when his top General Idi Amin Dada successfully staged a coup d'état. This effectively brought operations within the union to a halt. President Nyerere of Tanzania declined to acknowledge Idi Amin as the rightful president, preventing any meetings from taking place without the participation of Uganda's head of state. Disputes over both perceived and legitimate concerns on the unequal distribution of costs and benefits remained unresolved, and tensions came to a head in 1977 when the East African Corporation collapsed.

Regional scientists have attributed this disintegration to the absence of foundational policies and institutions to address emerging issues. They have described the 1967 EAC Treaty as weak in coordinating industrial sector leading to the dissolution of the East African Corporation. The East African Development Bank (EADB) had an important role, but without legislative powers. A case in point would be that if EADB financed steel mill in Uganda, there was no law that would stop Kenya from setting up a second steel mill to compete with the one in Uganda. The result was that the hopes of East Africans to have regional development with equal distribution of benefits were incompatible with reality. Benefits of membership went disproportionately to Kenya, because the colonial government which set up the system had their headquarters was based in Nairobi, Thus, Kenya got an economic head start, and dominated the intra-regional trade in manufactured products until today. This explains why Kenya is the biggest economy in the region.

The disintegration was also fueled by ideological differences between Tanzania and Kenya. Tanzania pursued a socialist approach while Kenya firmly followed the capitalist path to development. Uganda was not able to play a moderation role. Arguably, the lack of a common ideology, unequal distribution of benefits, absence of a political federation, and a common economic strategy effectively halted the East African Corporation's dream and made it defunct (Mugomba Agrippha T., 1978) & (Tarrósy, 2005).

However, more than 20 years later in 1999, the countries decided to pursue regional integration once more. It was revived and rebranded as the East African Community on November 30th, 1999, when Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania signed a new treaty that came into effect in July 2000 (AUC, 2019). By the time of signing the Treaty of the East African Community, there were fewer divisive influences, with the military dictatorship in Uganda having come to an end and Tanzania reducing its pursuit of socialism. The Partner States embraced competitive politics and a market economy, although their levels of enthusiasm varied (Juma V. Mwapachu, 2017) .

*Table 5: First EAC of 1902 to 1984*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Highlight</b>
1902	Mombasa-Kisumu railway completed

1905	East African Currency Board, East African Postal Union
1917	Customs Union between Kenya and Uganda
1919	East African Currency Board World War I
1922	Tanganyika becomes a British Mandated Territory
1927	Tanganyika joins the Customs Union
1931	Kenya-Uganda railway reaches Kampala
1936	The East African Shilling introduced
1940	East African Income Tax Board
1946	Tanganyika becomes a United Nations Trust Territory. East African Airways is founded. Directorate of Civil Aviation. East Africa Fisheries Research Organisation.
1947	East African Literature Bureau
1948	East African High Commission East African Railways and Harbor Services
1961	East African Common Services Organization. Tanganyika Independence
1962	Ugandan Independence
1963	Kenyan Independence
1964	Tanganyika and Zanzibar merge to form Tanzania. The Kampala Agreement to reduce trade imbalances but was never implemented.
1965	Tanzania and Uganda imposed quota-restrictions on intra-East African trade.
1966	The East African Currency Board was abolished.
1967	The Treaty for East African Cooperation. The East African Development Bank.
1971	The East African Authority ceased meeting (Military coup d'état in Uganda by Idi Amin)
1972	Expulsion of Asians from Uganda leading to economic collapse. Import restrictions imposed by the three countries leading to financial crises.
1976	Commission formed to review the Treaty adjourned a year later with no recommendations. Headquarters of the Harbors, Railways and Telecommunications Corporations broke up. The East African Railways came to an end.
1977	Tanzania and Kenya set up autonomous harbor services. Kenya established its own railway system. The East African Airways Corporation collapsed. Tanzania closed borders with Kenya ending common market. Kenya announced its withdrawal and took over all EAC services operating in Kenya. The EAC ceased operations.
1978-9	Tanzania-Uganda war.
1984	Agreement on division of EAC assets and liabilities.

**Source: Modified from Brian (2016)**

Table 6: Reconstitution of EAC

<b>Date</b>	<b>Highlight</b>
November 30th 1993	Permanent Tripartite Commission (PTC) for East Africa signed by the Heads of State of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania
29th April 1997	Commissioning of the treaty in Arusha
22nd January 1999	Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania sign new EAC Treaty
January 1999	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Foreign policy coordination, adoption of zero tariffs, implementation of COMESA's 80% tariff reduction, setting up of a mechanism to deal with terrorism and postponement of admitting Rwanda and Burundi. Tanzania withdraws from COMESA.
April 1999	Launch of East African Passport
1st January 2005	Customs Union becomes operational
18th June 2007	Rwanda and Burundi join
1st July 2010	Common Market Protocol
November 2013	Emergence of the "Coalition of the Willing" (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). Monetary Union Protocol signed
2nd March 2016	Launch of East African e-Passport
1st October 2016	South Sudan admitted as a full member
20th May 2017	Resolution by Heads of State to constitute a team to draft a constitution for Confederation.
11th July 2022	DRC joins EAC
4th March 2024	Somalia joins EAC

**Source: Modified from Brian (2016)**

### 3.1.3 Tourism Attractions in the selected EAC partner states

The East African Community (EAC) is a region known for its diverse and stunning tourism attractions. From the magnificent wildlife of the Serengeti and Maasai Mara to the crystal-clear waters of Zanzibar and the breathtaking landscapes of Rwanda, the EAC offers something for every traveler. In Tanzania, the Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area boast some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities in the world, with the chance to witness the annual wildebeest migration. The idyllic island of Zanzibar is famous for its white sandy beaches, spice plantations, and rich history, making it a popular destination for relaxation and cultural experiences (Tanzania High Commission in Nairobi, 2025).

Kenya is home to the iconic Maasai Mara National Reserve, where visitors can embark on unforgettable safari adventures and witness the Big Five in their natural habitat. Additionally, the vibrant capital city of Nairobi offers a mix of urban attractions and wildlife conservation experiences, including the renowned David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust elephant orphanage, (Magical Kenya, 2024). Rwanda, often referred to as the "Land of a Thousand Hills," is celebrated for its lush green landscapes, mountain gorilla trekking in Volcanoes National Park, and poignant

memorials that honor the country's history. The tranquil shores of Lake Kivu and the vibrant capital city of Kigali further showcase Rwanda's diverse offerings (Rwanda Eco Company, 2025)

Uganda is renowned for its diverse ecosystems, including the majestic Murchison Falls National Park, the pristine shores of Lake Victoria, and the opportunity to track endangered mountain gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The country's welcoming people and rich cultural heritage add an extra dimension to the tourism experience (Prime Safaris, 2025). In general, the East African Community stands out as a remarkable destination for travelers seeking natural beauty, diverse wildlife, rich cultures, and warm hospitality. Each member state offers an array of attractions that collectively create a captivating tapestry of experiences for tourists to explore and enjoy.

### 3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the beliefs, values, and assumptions that underlie a researcher's choice of research methods and the conduct of their research. It provides the framework for the research and influences the researcher's approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This study adopted modified version from Crotty's (1998) research framework based on epistemology, and Research Paradigms (Higgs et al., 2009).

*Table 7: Crotty's research framework based on epistemology*

<b>Epistemology</b>	<b>Theoretical Perspective</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Methods</b>
Objectivism	Positivism Post-positivism	Experimental research Survey research	Sampling Measurement, scaling Statistical analysis Questionnaire Focus-group interview
Constructivism	Interpretivism - Symbolic interactionism - Phenomenology - Hermeneutics Critical Inquiry Feminism	Ethnography Grounded theory Phenomenological research Heuristic inquiry Action research Discourse analysis Feminist standpoint	Qualitative interview Observation - Participant - Non-participant Case study Life history Narrative Theme identification
Subjectivism	Postmodernism Structuralism Post-structuralism	Discourse analysis Archeology Genealogy Deconstruction	Autoethnography Semiotics Literary analysis Pastiche Intertextuality

**Source: Crotty's (1998)**

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the study of knowledge, belief, and justification. It explores questions such as "What is knowledge?", "How is knowledge acquired?", and "What are the criteria for justifying beliefs as knowledge?" Epistemologists examine the nature of knowledge, the limits of what can be known, and the methods for obtaining knowledge. This

field delves into the complexities of perception, reason, and evidence, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of how we come to know and understand the world around us. In the realm of epistemology, pivotal questions address theories of knowing and the intricate relationship between the researcher and the researched in terms of fostering an understanding of the phenomenon under examination (Trede & Higgs, 2009). The researcher's philosophical framework plays a crucial role in shaping the conception of knowledge, whether it is construed as certainty, insights, or experiences. Epistemological inquiries often ponder over queries such as "How can we know that regional integration policies influence tourism management?" and "How do we know we know?" For a deeper exploration, we can consider examples like "How do tour operators make sense of their business experiences while traveling across the EAC?" and "What does it mean to be a regionally integrated?" next to "How do different regulations impact tourism management?"

According to (Crotty et al., 2020) epistemological framework under constructivism emphasizes the subjective nature of knowledge and the importance of understanding how individuals construct their own realities. This framework rejects the idea of an objective, external reality that can be fully known and instead focuses on how individuals create meaning and knowledge based on their experiences and interpretations. In this study, Crotty's approach emphasizes the role of EAC context and social interactions in shaping individuals' understanding of regional integration. It also acknowledges the influence of power dynamics of policymakers in Arusha and cultural factors in the EAC on knowledge construction.

The reason why the study-adopted constructivism is that Objectivism, in contrast to Crotty's constructivist framework, posits the existence of an objective, external reality that can be fully known and understood. Objectivism argues for the existence of universal truths and principles that are independent of individual perspectives or interpretations. However, it fails to account for the diverse ways in which individuals in the EAC create meaning and knowledge based on their unique experiences and social contexts. Objectivism overlooks the role of subjective interpretation and the influence of cultural and contextual factors in shaping individuals' understanding of reality.

On the other hand, subjectivism holds that all knowledge is a product of individual perspectives and experiences, rejecting the existence of any objective reality. However, this perspective neglects the influence of social interactions, language, and cultural factors in the EAC in shaping individuals' understanding of regional integration. It fails to address how shared meanings and interpretations are constructed within social contexts and how power dynamics of policy-makers affect knowledge construction by the policy consumers. Subjectivism also undermines the potential for shared understanding and collective knowledge production of the influence of regional integration on tourism management.

The general objective was to understand the influence of regional integration on tourism in the East African Community (EAC). This understanding is crucial for policymakers, stakeholders, and

businesses involved in the tourism industry as it can help them make informed decisions and develop strategies that maximize the benefits of regional integration. By comprehending the influence of regional integration on tourism, we can better assess the potential opportunities and challenges that may arise as a result of integration efforts within the EAC. The knowledge can aid in the formulation of sustainable tourism development plans that align with the overarching goals of regional integration while fostering economic growth, job creation, and cultural exchange. In addition, understanding this influence can also contribute to promoting collaboration and cooperation among EAC member states in exploiting their collective tourism resources and attractions. This can lead to the development of integrated tourism products, improved infrastructure, and enhanced marketing efforts that benefit the entire region.

The methodology borrowed from Crotty's framework was Phenomenology. This philosophical approach focuses on the study of human consciousness and the way individuals experience and perceive the world. It seeks to understand subjective experiences and how individuals make sense of their surroundings. When applied to study the influence of regional integration on tourism management in the East African Community, phenomenology involved examining the first-hand experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the tourism industry within the East African Community. This included understanding how they perceive the impact of regional integration on tourism, their experiences with cross-border travel and tourism activities, and the ways in which regional integration policies and initiatives have affected tourism management at both individual and organizational levels.

Finally, to implement phenomenological stance on the influence of regional integration on tourism management in the East African Community, the research methods can be applied Interviews, participant and non-participant observation, case study and textual review. Interviews were used to explore their lived experiences and perceptions of the impact of regional integration on tourism management. Participant observation involved traveling across the borders as a tourist to observe the procedures on free movement. Non-participant Observation was used to objectively observe and document the procedures of tour vans and tourists at the borders.

Case Study focused on half the number of partner states, and involved conducting in-depth case studies of specific tourism regulations to provide valuable insights into the practical implications of regional integration on tourism management. Through detailed examination of specific cases in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda, the uncovered controversies and complexities of the influence of regional integration on various aspects of tourism within the community.

Textual Review method entailed a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, policies, and reports related to regional integration and its effects on tourism management in the East African Community. This method helped in synthesizing existing knowledge and identifying key themes and trends to inform the phenomenological study. By employing these research methods, a holistic

understanding of the influence of regional integration on tourism management in the East African Community was achieved, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals involved in the industry.

(Higgs et al., 2009) also presents an interesting framework for understanding research paradigms, delineating three core research paradigms: the empirico-analytical, the interpretive, and the critical paradigm. These paradigms are composed of a set of beliefs, conventions, and assumptions that define the scope of meaningful questions, acceptable methods of inquiry, and criteria for determining the validity of research outcomes.

However, while Higgs's categorization provides a useful lens through which to view research approaches, it is essential to note that the boundaries between these paradigms are not always distinct, and researchers often draw from multiple paradigms within a single study. For instance, a researcher utilizing an interpretive paradigm may also integrate certain aspects of the empirico-analytical paradigm to bolster the rigor of their study in a mixed research study. This interdisciplinary approach challenges the notion of rigidly defined research paradigms and underscores the dynamic nature of research methodologies.

Furthermore, while Higgs emphasizes the significance of philosophical stance in shaping research paradigms, some critics argue that this approach may oversimplify the intricate interplay between philosophical underpinnings and methodological choices. Research paradigms are not merely a reflection of philosophical stance but rather a product of complex interactions between epistemological, ontological, and methodological considerations. It is based on these reasons that this study adopted a modified philosophy from both approaches as shown in Table 8.

*Table 8: Modified research framework for the study from Crotty (1998) and Research Paradigms (Higgs, 2001)*

<b>Epistemology</b>	<b>Theoretical Perspective</b>	<b>Philosophical Stance</b>	<b>Research Goals</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Methods</b>
Constructivism	Interpretivism	Idealism	Interpret and understand influence of regional integration on tourism in the EAC	Phenomenology	Interview, participant and non-participant observation, case study, textual review

**Source: Researcher (2024).**

### **3.3 Sample size**

(Lopez & Whitehead, 2013) state that unlike in quantitative approaches which aim to establish statistical significance by sampling a predetermined number of subjects, qualitative researchers do not usually begin a project with a predetermined sample size. They argue that in qualitative

research, there are no overall formal criteria for determining sample size and therefore no rules to suggest when a sample size is small or large enough for the study. Essentially, the richness of data collected is far more important than the number of participants (Tuckett, 2004). This said, researchers still require insight to the size most likely to achieve the purpose, context and the richness of the data collected (Patton, 2002).

Number of participants in qualitative studies usually range between 8 to 15, but will vary widely both inside and outside this range. Rarely is a huge number required but could be higher when it is more than one group required. Carlsen & Glenton (2011) add that sample size should refer to the number of groups and not the total of participants in study. Small samples however, are far more manageable because of the amount of potentially rich and detailed data that can be generated from each single participant.

*Table 9: Respondents interviewed*

<b>Respondent/Countries</b>	<b>Kenya</b>	<b>Rwanda</b>	<b>Uganda</b>	<b>Tanzania</b>
EAC	1	1	1	1
Ministry of tourism	1	1	1	1
Tour Operators	2	1	1	1
Tourists	5	3	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>

**Source: Researcher (2024).**

### **3.4 Sampling procedure and Sampling technique**

In this study, a three-lens framework was employed as a sampling procedure to gather data from respondents. The first lens targeted the Regional Policy Makers located at the East African Community (EAC) headquarters in Arusha, specifically focusing on individuals involved in tourism management. The second lens was directed towards the national government policy makers at the respective ministries of tourism within each partner state. These two categories were classified as "policy makers." The third lens, referred to as the "policy consumers," encompassed tour operators and tourists. This approach allowed for a comprehensive representation of stakeholders involved in the influence of regional integration on tourism management within the East African Community through purposive sampling. The main objective of purposive sampling in this study was to concentrate on specific characteristics the respondents that was of particular interest and that best allowed the researcher to address the research questions.

Respondents for the initial lens were selected through purposive sampling to ensure they had a comprehensive understanding of tourism within the EAC. Inclusion criteria required that respondents worked within the tourism department and had experience in the countries selected for the study. This approach was intended to gather insights from professionals directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the tourism industry within the EAC.

For the second lens, the selection of respondents was from the ministry or government docket responsible for tourism within the EAC. Similarly, purposive sampling was employed, with

inclusion criteria focused on individuals directly involved in the management and development of national tourism policies. This approach aimed to capture perspectives from key decision makers and policymakers within the partner states.

The third lens of the sampling procedure targeted individuals engaged in offering tour packages across the EAC partner states. Again, purposive sampling was utilized, with inclusion criteria specifying that respondents must provide tour packages to at least one EAC country other than the country in which they are registered. This approach sought to gather insights from tourism service providers operating within the EAC, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the regional tourism landscape. In the case of the tourists, they were selected through convenience sampling, considering their willingness to participate in interviews. This approach, while less stringent than purposive sampling, allowed for input from a diverse array of individuals experiencing tourism within the EAC, providing valuable perspectives from the consumer end of the industry.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

#### **3.5.1 Primary Data**

The first form of primary data for the study was through both participant and non-participant observation. Participant observation occurred when conducting cross-border research, which provided the opportunity to directly observe and interact with the respondents. Non-participant observation, on the other hand, involved observing queues at the borders, offering valuable insights into the practical aspects of border crossing for tour vans. Data collection across the borders began just before the Covid-19 pandemic. This allowed the researcher to travel between Kenya and Uganda through the Malaba one-stop border post, and between Uganda and Rwanda through the Katuna one-stop border post, returning via the Busia one-stop border post. The only addition to the border crossing that was possible was the Namanga one-stop border post between Kenya and Tanzania, which was to be used for accessing Arusha, where the EAC Headquarters is located, and therefore preserved for later. Unfortunately, a few months later, all the borders closed due to the pandemic, and it was only possible to observe from the Kenyan side without crossing over. Both participant and non-participant observation methods were suitable as they allowed for the collection of real-time, firsthand data in diverse settings, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The second form of primary data involved conducting semi-structured interviews with both policy makers and policy consumers. This approach enabled the collection of in-depth information from the participants while maintaining flexibility in the questioning process. However, due to Covid restrictions, securing interviews with the policy makers proved challenging. Some expressed concerns about the nature of the study, with questions arising about whether it was part of investigative journalism given the political nature of EAC regional integration.

### **3.6 Secondary Data**

Governance reports provided valuable insights into the overall regulatory and administrative framework within the East African Community, shedding light on policies, regulations, and initiatives that directly impact tourism management. The following reports were included: the Political Economy of Regional Integration in Africa by European Center for Development Policy Management (ecdpm), the African Regional Integration Index by the African Union and the World Bank, the Economic Report for Africa by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Africa Visa Openness Index by the African Development Bank, the Regional Economic Outlook by the International Monetary Fund, and the Trade and Development Reports by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, among many others listed in the references.

Videos about the history of EAC explained by the former President of Tanzania the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, and interviews by high ranking diplomats like the former EAC Secretary General Julius Mwapachu and many others were utilized to gather qualitative data by offering firsthand accounts and visual depictions of the impact of regional integration on tourism management. For instance, a documentary by the EAC showcasing the collaborative efforts of East African countries to promote regional infrastructure development, tourism and conservation efforts provided valuable qualitative insights into the influence of regional integration on tourism management in the East African Community.

Policy statements published by Trademark East Africa now rebranded to Trademark Africa offered direct insights into the official stances and objectives related to regional integration and tourism management. Analyzing policy statements that outline collaborative tourism development strategies or cross-border travel facilitation initiatives yielded qualitative data on the specific goals and priorities set forth by the EAC in relation to tourism management.

Task force recommendations such as the Report of the Committee on Fast Tracking East African Federation presented an in-depth exploration of the factors influencing the process of political federation in the East African region and recommended strategies for accelerating this union. The other recommendation used was the EAC Common Market Scorecard, which is a periodic report that evaluates the progress made in implementing the EAC Common Market Protocol. The report focuses on assessing the free movement of goods, labor, services, and capital within the East African Community (EAC). It provides an overview of the status of integration efforts and identifies areas that require attention and improvement. The report's recommendations are aimed at addressing challenges and promoting further integration within the EAC member states.

Annual reports included EAC Annual Report on which covers achievements and challenges encountered in the previous year in trade, infrastructure, political affairs, health and education. They also produce EAC Annual Report on Infrastructure Development, detailing progress on

roads, railway, ports, energy and telecommunication development across EAC partner states. The other is on EAC Facts and Figures providing statistical data for policy makers.

Laws governing regional integration and more specifically the EAC Treaty of 2000 provided qualitative insights into the regulatory frameworks shaping integration and tourism management. Analyzing laws related to cross-border travel facilitation, conservation efforts, and tourism promotion offered qualitative data on the extent to which regional integration has influenced policy and legal frameworks impacting tourism management.

### 3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

#### 3.7.1 Method of Analysis

The analysis of qualitative research notes begins in the field at the time of interviewing or observation as the researcher identifies problems and concepts appear (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). The researcher made short notes during the interview to see analysis emerging from the notes in order to make documentation easier. After that, the researcher took time to go through each documentation to clean the data and to delete any information that does not make sense. Thereafter, the researcher examined any existing relationship in the data before to commencing the coding process with the help of MAXQDA Analytics Pro, 2022.

*Table 10: Analytical Methods Adopted*

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Usefulness</b>
Conceptual Clarification	Involved the definitions of key concepts in regional integration, and examining different interpretations.	To minimize ambiguity and enhance comprehension.
Philosophical Critique	Analysis of regional integration theories' assumptions and their applicability to contemporary dilemmas in the EAC.	To gain a deeper understanding of the ideas shaping regional integration and tourism in the EAC, and identify potential limitations or biases within existing theories.
Diagnostic Analysis	Breaking down the organizational structure and operational procedures of EAC into constituent parts to assess their effectiveness, identify inefficiencies, and propose targeted interventions for enhancement.	To get in-depth assessment that provided a foundation for evidence-based recommendations to optimize benefits in the tourism sector.
Prescriptive Analysis	Evaluation of the effectiveness of EAC regional policies to propose alternative	To determine what should have been done or what could be done differently in the future by the EAC.

	approaches to address challenges.	
Constructive Analysis	Critical evaluation that aimed to identify positive aspects and strengths of regional integration policies, in addition to areas that require enhancement.	To offer balanced perspective on the strengths and weaknesses, that would offer actionable insights for meaningful contributions to the EAC.

**Source: Researcher (2024).**

*Table 11: Data Structure and Analytical Procedure*

<b>First-order Codes</b>	<b>Second-order Codes / Treaty Requirements</b>	<b>Influence on Tourism Management</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EAC citizens do not require a visa.</li> <li>- Foreigners can get e-visa.</li> <li>- There is visa on arrival</li> <li>- Traditional visas required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ease border crossing</li> </ul>	Free Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of national identity cards to travel by EAC citizens</li> <li>- Passports required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common travel documents</li> </ul>	Free Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Border restrictions between Kenya and Tanzania.</li> <li>- Border closures between Uganda and Rwanda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reciprocal border opening</li> </ul>	Free Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda abolished work permits.</li> <li>- Work permits in Tanzania</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common employment policies</li> </ul>	Free Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No regional center for employment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional center for employment promotion.</li> </ul>	Free Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of student visas and permits.</li> <li>- Availability of popular training institutions.</li> <li>- Adoption of Regional Qualification Framework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make training facilities available for partner states.</li> </ul>	Free Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of East African Tourism Platform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance activities of workers and employers organizations</li> </ul>	Free Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liberalization of air transport</li> <li>- Coordinated civil aviation security and safety</li> <li>- Conflicting BASA affect air routes</li> <li>- Affects fares and traffic levels</li> <li>- Competition and fear of lower profits</li> <li>- Protectionist policies using BASA</li> <li>- Bias towards foreign airlines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liberalize and grant air traffic rights.</li> </ul>	Infrastructure Integration

- Yellow Card for cars - Northern Corridor - Central Corridor	- Common insurance requirements	Infrastructure Integration
- TAZARA - SGR - Reduction of travel time - Wildlife viewing - Secondary tourists destinations - Affordability - Safety	- Common railway development and joint utilization of railway facilities	Infrastructure Integration
- Vessels only for freight - Opportunities to cut travel time - Benefits for local communities	- Jointly explore utilization of unexploited inland waterways transport.	Infrastructure Integration
- No requirements. - Standardization of qualification. - Work permits - Implementation burden	- Free movement of labor - Free movement of services	Trade Integration
- Cross border investment - Equitable employment opportunities	- Regional mobility and opportunities - Regional tourism	Trade Integration
- Social influence - Cross cultural experience	- Tourism initiatives - Challenges and opportunities - Perception of tourists	Political Integration

**Source: Researcher (2024).**

*Table 12: Illustrative Quotes*

<b>Summarized quotes</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
"If a Kenyan travels to any EAC State, they are not required to secure a visa. Other citizens also access Kenya visa-free. That means there is ease of movement for East Africans."	<b>PMRKEN</b>
"Common visa policies in the region for international tourists include traditional visa, e-visas, visa on arrival, and visa-free entry. No visa forms are foolproof."	<b>PMNKEN</b>
"We might as well relax visa restrictions and intensify surveillance to block suspects from gaining entry, and not the whole country."	<b>PMNKEN</b>
"For Kenya, Uganda, and Rwandan citizens, you only need your national ID to visit those countries, passport is not mandatory."	<b>PMRKEN</b>

<p>"To enter Tanzania as an EAC citizen you must present your passport."</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN2</b></p>
<p>"We used to allow Tanzanians into our sitting rooms but they only meet us at the gate. If they don't want to allow our vans in their country, then why should we allow theirs?"</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN3</b></p>
<p>"We have suffered significant losses in the tourism sector. Previously, we had the Maasai Mara, Serengeti, and Tsavo Triangle, but due to Tanzania's approach, we have suffered."</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN5</b></p>
<p>"Kenya should continue restricting vans from Tanzania from entering the country in a similar manner to how Tanzania restricts access from Kenya."</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN4</b></p>
<p>"It is a fair solution but the region would benefit more if there were no border restrictions for tourism business."</p>	<p><b>PMRRWD</b></p>
<p>"The problem lies with Kenya that has not been implementing the 1985 agreement, unlike Tanzania, which started in 2009. The bilateral agreement, signed by Kenya and Tanzania, prohibited tourist vans from both countries from accessing National Parks and Game reserves."</p>	<p><b>PMRTNZ</b></p>
<p>"During the Bujumbura meeting, Kenya and Uganda agreed to allow their vehicles with PSV stickers to cross the borders, avoiding any tourism standoff between the two countries."</p>	<p><b>PCTOUGD1</b></p>
<p>"The closure of Gatuna border had a significant impact on the free movement of tourists and rendered the purchase of the Single East African Tourist Visa, recognized by Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, impractical."</p>	<p><b>PMRUGD</b></p>

<p>"Tanzania refused to join the Single East African Tourist visa fearing that they would lose visa revenue.</p>	<p><b>PMRWD</b></p>
<p>"The EAC Common Market Protocol enables workers from any Partner State to seek employment in any other EAC country without facing discrimination based on nationality.</p>	<p><b>PMRUGD</b></p>
<p>"Tanzania policies stipulate that any foreigner must have a work permit without distinguishing whether they are from the East African Community, which contradicts the regional policy. That is why I cannot drive tourists who land in Kenya into Tanzania. I have to organize with a Tanzanian tour operator, reach the border at Namanga, and then hand over my clients to the Tanzanian side to continue with the tour."</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN2</b></p>
<p>"There are not harmonized labor policies for tourism workers in the EAC. If we had, then Tanzania wouldn't be putting restrictions on Kenyans to sell tourism. It is unfair that they work in Kenya without restrictions."</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN4</b></p>
<p>"Having a regional center for employment is a great initiative but for now, it does not exist. The high rate of unemployment in the partner states does not seem to motivate them to establish such a center."</p>	<p><b>PMNKEN</b></p>
<p>"Moi University's School of Tourism Management, situated in Eldoret, provides undergraduate and postgraduate programs in tourism management."</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN2</b></p>
<p>"Makerere University's Department of Forestry, Biodiversity, and Tourism, located in Kampala,</p>	<p><b>PMRUGD</b></p>

provides undergraduate and postgraduate programs in tourism management and wildlife tourism."	
"Uganda Hotel and Tourism Training Institute (UHTTI) in Jinja offers various diploma and certificate courses in hotel management and tourism."	<b>PMRUGD</b>
"The National College of Tourism (NCT) in Dar es Salaam provides diploma and certificate courses in hospitality and tourism management. The University of Dar es Salaam's Department of Tourism and Heritage offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in tourism and heritage management."	<b>PCTOUTAN1</b>
"The Rwanda Tourism University College (RTUC) in Kigali offers diploma and degree programs in tourism, travel, and hospitality management."	<b>PCTOURWD1</b>
"The common prerequisites for a student visa or permit often include demonstrating admission to an educational institution, financial support, and sometimes undergoing a medical examination."	<b>PMRUGD</b>
"The adoption of the Regional Qualifications Framework is anticipated to facilitate the mobility of students and skilled workers within the region."	<b>PMRUGA</b>
"EATP serves as the private sector representative for tourism in East Africa, with the goal of advancing the interests and involvement of the private sector in the East African Community (EAC) integration process."	<b>PMRRWD</b>
"Tanzania is identified as the most restrictive markets in the region."	<b>PMRUGD</b>
"The Ethiopian liberalization was implemented with the specific aim of increasing tourist inflow to Dar es Salaam because it is the only continental	<b>PMRTNZ</b>

carrier offering international flights from its Arusha hub."	
"Conflicting regulations and limitations set forth in different BASAs impede the establishment of streamlined air routes and operational standards."	<b>PMRTNZ</b>
"The constraints imposed by these BASAs have a significant impact on service levels, fares, and overall traffic between the countries."	<b>PMRKEN</b>
"There is a concern of competition from more established airlines in the region."	<b>PMRTNZ</b>
"Uganda shares the same concerns of navigating competition, operational costs, and market demand."	<b>PMRUGD</b>
"To illustrate, seventeen foreign airlines currently enjoy fifth freedom rights between African cities, while only eleven African carriers have the same privilege."	<b>PMRUGD</b>
"The only existing common vehicle insurance is the Yellow Card within COMESA, and applies in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda. Tanzania withdrew from COMESA in the year 2000."	<b>PMRUGD</b>
"The Northern Corridor is crucial in East Africa as it connects seven out of the eight EAC countries—Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, South Sudan, and Somalia—to the port of Mombasa."	<b>PMRKEN</b>
"In the southern part of the EAC, the Central Corridor holds significant importance as it connects the port of Dar es Salaam to markets in Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and the DRC."	<b>PMRKEN</b>
"The TAZARA railway infrastructure has faced challenges due to deteriorating tracks."	<b>PMRTNZ</b>

<p>"The unique opportunity for wildlife viewing along the SGR route has emerged as a notable factor contributing to its influence on Kenya's tourism."</p>	<p><b>PMCTOKEN2</b></p>
<p>"The SGR has not only reduced travel time but led to the growth in secondary tourist destinations along towns such as Voi, Mtito Andei, and Emali have experienced heightened tourist activities."</p>	<p><b>PMNKEN</b></p>
<p>"A regular SGR ticket between Mombasa and Nairobi is approximately \$9 while for a journey that takes six hours while a regular bus ticket is never constant and can range between \$9 to \$15."</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN3</b></p>
<p>"There have been no reported SGR accidents since its establishment seven years ago."</p>	<p><b>PCTOKEN2</b></p>
<p>"Grindrod will operate this vessel, providing freight carriers with access to a secure and scheduled freight service between Uganda and Tanzania."</p>	<p><b>PMRUGD</b></p>
<p>"The EAMT vessel is expected to cross the lake in eighteen hours, a significant improvement over the current journey time of three to four days on congested regional roads."</p>	<p><b>PMRUGD</b></p>
<p>"While this initiative chiefly focuses on trade, it currently does not incorporate tourism opportunities."</p>	<p><b>PMRUGD</b></p>
<p>"The primary beneficiaries of the improved inland transport are the communities living in the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB), which spans Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania."</p>	<p><b>PMRTNZ</b></p>
<p>"Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda have abolished work permits, while it is a requirement to work in Tanzania."</p>	<p><b>PMRKEN</b></p>

"The region has not adopted a standardized framework for qualifications, although this is progressing very slowly."	<b>PMRUGD</b>
"The Tanzanian policy of requiring EAC citizens to obtain a work permit from the Tanzanian Immigration Department presents a barrier to labor mobility within the East African Community."	<b>PCTOKEN2</b>
"The requirement for EAC citizens to demonstrate that a Tanzanian citizen cannot fill the position may be burdensome and difficult to prove."	<b>PCTOKEN2</b>
"A federation could contribute to preventing conflicts between neighboring countries, ultimately promoting political stability in the region and this will consequently create a safer and more appealing environment for tourists."	<b>PCTOKEN3</b>
"My worry is whether countries like Tanzania will benefit equally with Kenya being a stronger economy."	<b>PCTTNZ2</b>
"A political federation could provide a framework for unified and coordinated management of the lake and its surrounding resources, leading to more effective conservation efforts. This would be particularly advantageous for tourism, as Lake Victoria is a significant attraction in the region."	<b>PCTUGD1</b>
"Tourism development around Lake Victoria could lead to increased human activity and potential environmental degradation, posing a threat to the delicate ecosystem of the lake."	<b>PCTUGD1</b>
"A federation will allow individuals to explore new job opportunities, seek higher education, or simply experience life in different parts of EAC."	<b>PMRKEN2</b>
"Tourists from member states would be more inclined to explore the diverse tourist attractions"	<b>PCTOUGD2</b>

across the East African Community, leading to a potential redistribution of tourism traffic within the region."	
"For instance, a Ugandan tour operator may work in Kenya, contributing to the diversity of the workforce and gaining valuable cross-cultural experiences."	<b>PCTOUUGD1</b>
"Kenyans are considered to have higher qualifications in the region and there should be a policy to ensure they do not take all the job opportunities."	<b>PCTOUTNZ3</b>
"Individuals who relocate to another member state within the federation may attract friends and relatives from their home country to visit and explore the new environment."	<b>PCTOUKEN2</b>
"A Kenyan entrepreneur, for instance, may invest in real estate in Uganda, diversifying their portfolio... leading to the development of tourism infrastructure such as hotels, resorts, and recreational facilities."	<b>PCTUGD2</b>

Source Researcher (2024).

**3.8 Ethical Considerations**

The research study upheld the highest ethical standards while adhering to a stringent code of conduct. The integrity of the study was preserved through the avoidance of any distortion or falsification of data, thus underscoring the dedication to the principles of honesty and accuracy within the framework of the research process. By adhering to such ethical guidelines, the study endeavored to establish a foundation of reliability, thereby ensuring the trustworthiness and validity of the research findings. Emphasis was placed to ensure objectivity during interviews, thereby safeguarding the study from any potential bias. In addition, the study gave credit to the contributions of other authors through appropriate citations, reinforcing the principle of academic integrity and acknowledging the intellectual properties of fellow researchers. The study abstained from employing any form of inducement, whether in the form of financial remuneration or otherwise, in the collection of data. This ethical stance was adopted to maintain the impartiality and integrity of the research process, thereby fortifying the validity and credibility of the study's findings.

### **3.9 Research Limitations**

One major limitation of this study lies on the theoretical framework adopted. The claim that it is possible to guarantee objective reality in social world has been challenged. The belief that a social science researcher can disconnect personal principals and morals during research is considered impossible. The argument is that despite any effort to bracket out their own individualized experiences, interviews always lead to generation of researchers own internalized data. Therefore, this study acknowledges that human limitations can influence understanding of social data. With this limitation in mind, even though the ultimate truth may not be established, the study takes cognizance of the fact that there are knowledge claims that are still valid and that can be used in this study to attain its objectives.

Price (2002) also identifies limitations of interviews in research due to managing sequence of interviews, securing access to documents considered as sensitive records. Lopez & Whitehead (2013) add that interview questions might be emotive, biased and unbalanced. To avoid this, the researcher explained why such questions are of interest and how answering them will enhance quality findings. Most importantly, the researcher tried to conduct each interview as a discussion rather than a question and answer session while also treating participants with respect and politeness at all times.

## 4 CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Research Question 1

#### 4.1.1 How does the free movement protocol influence tourism management in the EAC?

This question sought to examine the implementation of the EAC Free Movement protocol in the tourism sector. The provision for the free movement of people, labor, services, and the right to establish and reside within the East African Community (EAC) is detailed in Chapter 17 of the EAC Treaty, titled "Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence," particularly in Article 104 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. The subsidiary questions for research question 1 were formulated based on article 104, subsection 3.

When asked what is the ease of border crossing procedures and regulations within the East African Community (EAC), and how it affects tourism in the region, the respondents gave exciting views. According to PMRKEN, '...if a Kenyan travels to any EAC State, they are not required to secure a visa. Other citizens also access Kenya visa free. That means there is ease of movement for East Africans'. The partner states of the East African Community (EAC) have implemented the EAC Treaty provisions outlined in article 104 subsection 3 (a). This has led to the ease of travel for citizens of all EAC partner states within the region for tourism and other purposes without the need for a visa.

The tourism industry has long advocated for the complete removal of visa requirements as a means to enhance destinations' competitiveness. According to WTTC (2019), 53% of the world's population still relies on paper visas, while 16% need visas upon arrival. However, these policies have drawbacks and may not be the most effective options from security and efficiency standpoints. For instance, obtaining paper-based visas often entails significant financial and time costs, as potential tourists are required to apply at a consulate. The security benefits for low-risk regions are also not notably significant or efficient. Moreover, applicants sometimes have to travel great distances to apply at a consulate of the country they intend to visit.

Likewise, e-visas and visa on arrival as offered by EAC partner states do not significantly enhance national security because the traveler would have already gained entry into the country. 'Common visa policies in the region for international tourists include traditional visa, others qualify for e visas, others for visa on arrival and others visa free entry. No visa forms are foolproof. Security will always be an issue even with the e visa and visa on arrival options that we currently apply. We might as well relax the visa restrictions, and intensify surveillance to block the suspects from gaining entry, and not the whole country', PMNKEN. From a security standpoint, if the individual had malicious intentions, they could potentially exploit a network with the assistance of airport workers. In addition, if a member of a group of regular tourists or a family with a questionable past is denied a visa upon arrival, it can significantly disrupt the entire holiday experience for the

rest of the group. This kind of situation could tarnish the destination's reputation and erode confidence among prospective travelers in the future.

Given security concerns, completely phasing out visa procedures on a global scale is not pragmatic. However, viable alternatives should be considered. For example, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda have introduced electronic visas in the form of the single East Africa tourism visa. This allows non-EAC citizens to stay for up to 90 days in any of the three countries. These electronic visas offer both secure and convenient travel experiences. Unlike traditional paper-based visas, electronic visas can be applied for and supported documents submitted online, with online payment and notification of approval or rejection. In the case of EAC, this visa allows visitors to explore multiple countries with a single visa. Although it can be applied for online or upon arrival, the latter option has its drawbacks as previously discussed. The cost of this visa is 100 USD, and it does not cover travel to other East African countries such as Tanzania, Somalia, and DRC. However, Burundi and South Sudan have expressed interest in joining in 2024, in order to ease movement in and out of their countries.

The question on what are the requirements for border crossing within the EAC had interesting findings. PMRKEN stated that ‘for Kenya, Uganda and Rwandan citizens, you only need your national ID to visit those countries, passport is not mandatory’. Some partner states have gone a step further to permit travel within the region using their National Identification cards. This has significant implications for tourism, as all EAC citizens possess valid National Identification Cards, although not all hold East African Community Passports. Consequently, citizens of Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda can freely travel between their countries, while only those with East African Community Passports can engage in tourism travel to Tanzania. ‘To enter Tanzania as an EAC citizen you must present your passport’ PCTOKEN2

Eliminating the passport requirement for EAC citizens alleviates the burden of both time and financial costs. For instance, Kenyans have voiced their frustration about the difficulties in obtaining a passport for international travel, citing long queues and delays of several months. Additionally, the financial cost of passports is a significant concern for ordinary citizens in the East African Community. In Kenya, an EAC e-passport is priced at around \$32 for a 34-page passport, \$43 for a 50-page passport, and \$85 for a 66-page passport. In Uganda, the cost is approximately \$67, while in Tanzania and Rwanda, it is approximately \$65.

This highlights the statistics on visitor arrivals from countries that allow travelers to utilize national identification cards for entry. According to the UBOS (2024), Kenyan visitors constitute the highest percentage of arrivals to Uganda, representing 26.9% of the total visitors in 2022. Following closely are Rwandan visitors, comprising 17.1% of the arrivals, while Tanzanians contribute 6.7% of the total visitors. Conversely, statistics from the Rwanda Development Board demonstrate that Ugandans are the most frequent visitors to Rwanda, constituting 32.1% of the

total annual arrivals, with Kenyans following at 21.7% and Tanzanians at 8.5%. Moreover, data from the Kenya Bureau of Statistics indicates that Ugandan visitors form the largest group of arrivals to Kenya, representing 19.9% of the total annual visitors, followed by Tanzanians at 15.3% and Rwandans at 9.1%.

(PCTOKEN1) contends 'It is easy for EAC citizens to cross the border because all they need is their national identification cards....My village is Busia and sometimes we cross from Kenya to drink cheaper alcohol in Uganda and back without going through the immigration office....It is good for tourism because when we spend money traveling across the borders, revenue is generated'." This assertion was confirmed when the researcher inadvertently traversed from Kenya into Uganda without awareness, necessitating a return after being unable to locate the immigration office while already in Uganda. This scenario raises questions about the argument against making the East African Community (EAC) totally free movement without passing at the immigration offices due to security reasons. Currently, all travelers are required to present an ID card for EAC citizens or a passport - including foreigners - as well as a Yellow fever certificate at the immigration desk. 'It is not as free as Schengen for security reasons, but it is the same free movement when moving within your own country, where you must identify yourself with police officers if asked to' (PMRKEN). This is unlike the Schengen system where the citizens do not require to pass through immigration offices. Traveling within the EAC always involves passing through the immigration office, regardless of whether you are a foreigner or not. Therefore, does the freedom of movement in Schengen equate to the freedom of movement in the EAC? What exactly are the criteria to determine the level of freedom within a region? Should it be about crossing the border without being stopped and saving time, or does it solely revolve around the visa process?

In terms of the time it took at the at the border, the study using an observations checklist revealed that travelers typically took three to five minutes to complete the crossing. The length of the queues depended on the presence of public bus transports at the borders. There were no separate queues for tourists, who often took longer to cross if they arrived after the public transport buses. This was due to the fact that most tourists are well-prepared, having received advice from tour van drivers, and thus have all their documentation ready, resulting in shorter processing times. However, first-time regular travelers of the East African Community (EAC) often took longer due to reasons such as missing or expired Yellow fever certificates or failure to carry their original identification cards.

Moreover, at all the borders we visited when entering Uganda, travelers are required to fill out hand-written forms. While Kenya and Rwanda do not have this requirement at their border crossings, Uganda still insists on this practice. It has even led to some individuals offering assistance to illiterate travelers for a fee. For those who can read and write, the absence of a pen can be problematic, as there are always people ready to rent out their pens for a fee. The price

offered for a pen can be quite steep, making it an unexpectedly expensive purchase for travelers. Nevertheless, if the borders already allow movement without going through the immigration office and security has been maintained, why shouldn't the EAC consider adopting the Schengen system of free movement without the need to stop at the immigration office?

On the question of reciprocal opening of border posts within the East African Community (EAC) the partner states have developed 12 one stop border posts( OSBP): Namanga OSBP between Kenya and Tanzania, Busia OSBP between Kenya and Uganda, Gatuna/Katuna OSBP between Rwanda and Uganda, Holili/Taveta OSBP between Kenya and Tanzania, Mutukula OSBP between Uganda and Tanzania, and others. However, despite efforts to promote regional integration and ease of movement across borders, there have been instances of border closures that have disrupted cross-border activities, including tourism. The tourism sector commonly experiences border controversies, with the most prevalent occurring between Kenya and Tanzania, which are the largest tourism markets in the East African Community (EAC). The tour van controversy, for instance, has garnered periodic media attention, reflecting the ongoing dispute between the two nations.

According to (PCTOKEN3) 'We used to allow Tanzanians into our sitting rooms but they only meet us at the gate. If they don't want to allow our vans in their country, then why should we allow theirs?' The dispute between Tanzania and Kenya involved Tanzania prohibiting Kenyan tour vans from entering the country, followed by Kenya reciprocating the ban at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, the primary entry point for the East African Community. With many tourists arriving at JKIA before traveling to popular destinations like Mt. Kilimanjaro and Serengeti, denying access to Tanzanian tour vans caused significant disruption and outcry.

While some analysts argue that Kenya's action was contrary to the spirit of the East African Community (EAC), (PCTOKEN5) had a different perspective. 'We have suffered significant losses in the tourism sector. Previously, we had the Maasai Mara, Serengeti, and Tsavo Triangle, but due to Tanzania's approach, we have suffered. Kenya should continue restricting vans from Tanzania from entering the country in a similar manner to how Tanzania restricts access from Kenya.' PMRRWD considers it as '...it is a fair solution but the region would benefit more if there were no border restrictions for tourism business.'

(PMRTNZ) pointed out that the issue stems from Kenya's failure to adhere to the 1985 agreement. 'The problem lies with Kenya that has not been implementing the 1985 agreement unlike Tanzania which started in 2009. The bilateral agreement, signed by Kenya and Tanzania, prohibited tourist vans from both countries from accessing National Parks and Game reserves.' While Tanzania fully implemented the agreement, Kenya only partially relaxed the rules, allowing Tanzanian vans to access its international airports. The agreement stipulates that tourist vans from Kenya can drop off passengers at the border posts of Lunga Lungu, Taveta, Namanga, and Nyakiyakaye on the Kenyan side, while Tanzanian vans can drop off passengers at Horohoro, Himo, Namanga, and

Sirare. Kenyan tourist vans are permitted to transport tourists to the regional towns of Tanga, Moshi, Arusha, and Musoma, while Kenya allows access to all towns. However, the agreement does not grant access to airports, game reserves, and parks, which was the main point of contention.

Kenya defended its decision by stating that it was made in response to Tanzania's slow progress in resolving the dispute, despite an agreement among East African Community (EAC) countries to implement a single tourist visa for the region. According to (PMNKEN), 'a meeting was held in Bujumbura in 2013 involving Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to address tourism issues. The EAC Secretariat requested the three countries to review their bilateral agreements, a task that Kenya and Uganda completed. However, Tanzania requested additional time for consultation'. This hesitation has become associated with Tanzania and is humorously referred to as "more time to consult," reflecting their decision-making approach in EAC matters.'

(PCTOUGD1) adds, 'during the Bujumbura meeting, Kenya and Uganda agreed to allow their vehicles with PSV stickers to cross the borders, avoiding any tourism standoff between the two countries.' The harmonious relationship between Kenya and Uganda has effectively prevented any border disputes from arising in the tourism sector. While potential health-related closures pose a significant threat, trade disputes have been mitigated due to Uganda's reliance on Kenya for importing goods through the Port of Mombasa. In the case of Kenya and Tanzania during the EAC Bujumbura meeting, they had agreed to implement the 1985 agreement, with a provision for a review within six months. However, the review did not take place, prompting Kenya to request Tanzania to comply with the agreement within three weeks, failing which they would be barred from entering Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA).

That explains the genesis of the tour van controversy that led to its news coverage. A prolonged exchange of accusations between neighboring members of the EAC, who have agreed to jointly promote the region as a single tourism destination, persists even after nearly a decade. It is evident that the inconvenience of switching vans at the Kenya-Tanzania borders negatively impacts tourists wishing to visit both countries. Ultimately, this cumbersome process may dissuade tourists from exploring the entire region.

The tour van controversy has brought into question the level of commitment to regional integration as outlined in the EAC Treaty 2000. This is just one of several trade disputes in the region, including the recent ban in January 2024 when Tanzania blocked passenger flights from Kenyan Airways in response to Kenya blocking its cargo flights. Following these events, the foreign affairs ministers of Tanzania and Kenya took to Twitter to express their commitment to resolving the dispute amicably within three days. Despite expectations for regional integration to facilitate reciprocal border openings in order to promote free movement, it seems that this concept remains elusive for the tourism sector in the East African Community (EAC).

In March 2019, the Gatuna/Katuna the border closure began due to tensions and security concerns between Rwanda and Uganda. The closure of the Gatuna border post caused significant disruptions in trade and movement, affecting traders and transporters. This continued to January 2022, when Rwanda announced the reopening of the border post on January 31, 2022, following diplomatic efforts and engagements. A visit by Ugandan Lt. Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba to Rwanda, where he met with President Kagame, was seen as a crucial step toward improving relations between the two countries, (Uwiringiyimana, 2022). ‘The closure of Gatuna border had a significant impact on the free movement of tourists and rendered the purchase of the Single East African Tourist Visa, recognized by Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, impractical’, PMRUGD. Tourists visiting Uganda and wanting to head south to Rwanda had to obtain an additional visa for Tanzania and another one for Rwanda because the single East African Tourism Visa becomes invalid when you cross outside the three countries. ‘Tanzania refused to join the Single East African Tourist visa fearing that they would lose visa revenue’. PMRWD. These unilateral and intermittent closures of border posts throughout the East African Community (EAC), notwithstanding the treaty's stipulations for free movement, present challenges for tourists and exert detrimental impacts on the tourism sector.

In terms of the common employment policies for tourism practitioners across the EAC, ‘The EAC Common Market Protocol enables workers from any Partner State to seek employment in any other EAC country without facing discrimination based on nationality’ (PMRUGD). The EAC are currently in different phases of implementing policies that are in line with the EAC's goal of facilitating the free movement of individuals, labor, and services within the community. For example, ‘Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have abolished work permit requirements for EAC citizens’, PMRRWD.

According to PCTOKEN2 ‘Tanzania policies stipulate that any foreigner must have a work permit without distinguishing whether they are from the East African Community, which contradicts the regional policy. That is why I cannot drive tourists who land in Kenya into Tanzania. I have to organize with a Tanzanian tour operator, reach the border at Namanga, and then hand over my clients to the Tanzanian side to continue with the tour.’

EAC (2024) states that any worker with a contract of employment lasting more than 90 days in another Partner State must apply for a work permit within 15 working days from entering the territory of the host Partner State. For employment periods of not more than 90 days, a worker should apply for and be issued with a special pass. In case an application for a work permit is rejected, the competent authority must provide a written notification to the applicant, stating the reasons for the rejection. Workers have the right to access social security benefits and can be accompanied by their spouse and children.

Partner States committed to opening up employment opportunities for different categories of workers: Kenya: Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Associate Professionals, and Craft and Related Trades Workers. Rwanda: Professionals and Technicians and Associate Professionals.

Tanzania: Professionals and Technicians and Associate Professionals. Uganda: Managers, Professionals, and Craft and Related Trades Workers (EAC, 2024).

Linked to this employment policies was the question on harmonization of labor policies for tourism workers. ‘There are not harmonized labor policies for tourism workers in the EAC. If we had, then Tanzania wouldn’t putting restrictions on Kenyans to sell tourism in. It is unfair that they work in Kenya without restrictions’ PCTOKEN4. The study found out that there is a strong emphasis on the Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications. Currently, four Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) have been successfully negotiated and signed. These cover essential professional areas such as Accountancy, Engineering, Architecture, and Veterinary Science. The completion of these agreements represents a significant milestone in promoting cross-border cooperation and easing the recognition of diverse skill sets and expertise within the Community. Negotiations for MRAs related to Advocates and Land Surveying are currently in progress. Upon finalization, these agreements will further strengthen the framework for mutual recognition, ensuring that professionals in these fields can seamlessly practice their skills and contribute across EAC borders (EAC, 2024).

	Frequency
Free Movement	58
Security Concerns	49
Challenges with the current system	42
Benefits of EAC integration to free movement	22
Movement of persons across the continent's borders (+)	18
Visa requirements	18
evisa	17
No visa	8
Visa on arrival	8
Visa required	5
Regional development and competitiveness	4
Travel facilitation	4
Regional integration as an enabler for tourism development	1
Access to technology	1
Government investment	1
Technological requirements	1
Travel burden	1
Adaptation to changing needs	1
Visa policy reform	1
Security and verification	1
Security concerns	1
Reciprocal commitments	1
Visa-free entry	1
Accessibility and inclusivity	1
Benefits of e-visa systems	1
E-visa effectiveness	1
E-visa systems	1
Efficiency and time-saving	1
Technological advancement	1
DOCUMENTS with code(s)	58
DOCUMENTS without code(s)	10
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	68

Figure 12: Code Frequencies

The absence of a regional center for the promotion of productivity and employment, as well as the exchange of information on tourism employment opportunities as outlined in the Treaty, prevented further exploration of the issue. 'Having a regional center for employment is a great initiative but for now, it does not exist. The high rate of unemployment in the partner states does not seem to motivate them to establish such a center', PMNKEN. Subsequent research efforts should focus on identifying the reasons behind this and understanding the barriers to its realization.

How have the partner states made their tourism training facilities available to persons from other partner states? East African Citizens have the opportunity to pursue their tourism studies in any of the partner states provided they meet the specified criteria, such as academic performance, entrance examinations, application procedures, and deadlines. The partner states of the East African Community (EAC) have established systems to acknowledge academic qualifications obtained within the region, simplifying the process of transferring students and academic credits across borders. Despite the freedom of movement enjoyed by EAC citizens within the region, it is essential for them to adhere to immigration regulations for educational purposes. This usually entails obtaining a student visa or permit.

'One popular tourism facility in the region is Kenya Utalii College' PMNKEN. Located in Nairobi, is widely recognized as one of the premier hospitality and tourism training institutions in Africa. It offers a wide range of diploma and certificate programs in hospitality and tourism management. 'Moi University's School of Tourism Management, situated in Eldoret, provides undergraduate and postgraduate programs in tourism management' PCTOKEN2. Chuka University's Department of Tourism and Hospitality, located in Chuka offers degrees in hospitality and tourism management. In Uganda, 'Makerere University's Department of Forestry, Biodiversity, and Tourism, located in Kampala, provides undergraduate and postgraduate programs in tourism management and wildlife tourism', PMRUGD. Additionally, the Uganda Hotel and Tourism Training Institute (UHTTI) in Jinja offers various diploma and certificate courses in hotel management and tourism. In Tanzania, 'the National College of Tourism (NCT) in Dar es Salaam provides diploma and certificate courses in hospitality and tourism management. The University of Dar es Salaam's Department of Tourism and Heritage offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in tourism and heritage management', PCTOUTAN1. The Rwanda Tourism University College (RTUC) in Kigali offers diploma and degree programs in tourism, travel, and hospitality management.

'The common prerequisites for a student visa or permit often include demonstrating admission to an educational institution, financial support, and sometimes undergoing a medical examination' PMRUGD. In addition, institutions frequently require the verification of prior academic credentials, which may involve obtaining an equivalency certificate from the relevant education authority in the host country. Efforts are also being made by the East African Inter-University Council to encourage East African countries to adopt the Regional TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Qualifications Framework.



## 4.2 Research Question 2

### 4.2.1 *What is the influence of infrastructure integration on tourism management in the EAC?*

What regional integration policies has the EAC implemented to enhance air, rail, road, and water transportation? There is no EAC regional integration policy for air transport, which is contrary to the vision outlined in Chapter Fifteen of the EAC Treaty, specifically focusing on Co-operation in Infrastructure and Services. Article 92 of the treaty addresses Civil Aviation and Civil Air transport, but efforts to implement this section have faced challenges.’ Tanzania is identified as the most restrictive markets in the region’ PMRUGD.

The lack of uniform Bilateral Air Service Agreements (BASAs) among the Partner States has posed challenges to the harmonization of air transport services within the East African Community. Uganda has opened its aviation market specifically for Kenya, while Rwanda and Tanzania have similarly liberalized their aviation market, specifically for Ethiopia. ‘The Ethiopian liberalization was implemented with the specific aim of increasing tourist inflow to Dar es Salaam because it is the only continental carrier offering international flights from its Arusha hub’ (PMRTNZ).

The Kenya-Uganda and Kenya-Burundi routes are fully liberalized, allowing Kenya Airways, the national carrier, to operate without any restrictions on capacity, frequency, pricing, or fifth freedoms, which is the right to carry traffic between two foreign countries with services starting or ending in the airline’s own country. The Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) was anticipated to bring about a positive change in the region. However, this expectation was not realized, as two major aviation hubs in the region, namely Tanzania and Uganda, did not ratify the SAATM agreement.

The only recognizable regional effort in air transport was the EAC Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) was established in 2007 as a body under the EAC with the purpose of providing a common framework and mechanism for the Partner States to meet their international safety and security oversight obligations in air transport. ‘CASSOA aims to facilitate the coordinated development of civil aviation safety and security oversight infrastructure’, (PMRUGD) through the effective implementation of international safety and security-related standards and recommended practices. However, it does not address a regional initiative to improve the efficiency and affordability of air travel.

### 4.2.2 *How do the regional infrastructure policies of the EAC affect the management of tourism in the region?*

Existing restrictive BASAs among Partner States can hinders the seamless operation of air transport services by creating barriers and inconsistencies. This hinders the efforts to create a unified and efficient air transport system in the region. PMRTAZ says that ‘conflicting regulations

and limitations set forth in different BASAs impede the establishment of streamlined air routes and operational standards, making flights for tourists complicated'. As a result, these inconsistencies hinder the overall goal of creating a cohesive and integrated air transport network.

According to PMRKEN, 'The constraints imposed by these BASAs have a significant impact on service levels, fares, and overall traffic between the countries'. This is corroborated by Consulting (2017) report which indicates that the average annual growth rate of the two liberalized country pairs (Kenya-Burundi and Kenya-Uganda) is twice that of the other country pairs that have not yet been liberalized. The Open Skies Treaty will result in the continent's major carriers – Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, RwandAir, and South African Airways – benefiting from unrestricted access and the ability to operate to multiple destinations in any city within the countries covered by the agreement. This is part of the African Union's efforts to enhance connectivity and foster integration among African nations.

This initiative is expected to fully liberalize air transport markets in Africa, offering lower fares, better connectivity, and increased demand for tourism. According to (PMRRWD), 'opening up the continent's aviation market is crucial to reducing transportation costs. Consulting (2017) estimates a reduction of more than 25% in fares as airlines increase frequencies and expand into new territories. As a result, with increased travel for tourism due to market liberalization, more airlines will enter the EAC market.

#### *4.2.3 What are the barriers to effective infrastructure integration in the EAC and how can they be resolved?*

In the realm of aviation 'There is a concern of competition from more established airlines in the region,' PMRTNZ. Tanzania has been providing support for the revival of Air Tanzania, which reemerged in 2016 with aspirations of expanding its operations within the region. The revival of Air Tanzania and its aspirations for expansion are a significant concern for Tanzania due to the potential competition from established regional airlines like Kenya Airways. If liberalization occurs, it could further intensify the competition and weaken Air Tanzania's ability to compete effectively. This could potentially affect the growth and sustainability of the airline, as it may struggle to establish its presence in the regional aviation market.

'Uganda shares the same protectionist concerns of navigating competition, operational costs, and market demand' PMRUGD. Without a solid strategy and government support, liberalization could potentially impact the financial viability of Air Uganda. Many governments have voiced apprehension about the potential for liberalization to result in the dominance of larger, well-capitalized foreign carriers at the expense of smaller, and less financially supported local carriers Consulting (2017).

In some cases, it has been alleged that certain governments in the region show favoritism towards foreign airlines over African carriers, leading to unequal and discriminatory treatment. 'To illustrate, seventeen foreign airlines currently enjoy fifth freedom rights between African cities,

while only eleven African carriers have the same privilege PMRUGD. More countries need to join in order to make progress. Additionally, ‘increased investment in aviation infrastructure, including airports and related services, is necessary to attain regional integration of air transport in the EAC’ (PCTORWD). Prior to January 1, 2014, Rwanda's airspace was under the management of the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA). This was a component of regional collaborative endeavors aimed at ensuring the safety and effectiveness of air traffic control in Rwanda.

The countries in the region have been working for the past 24 years to establish a unified airspace, but have faced challenges due to restrictive bilateral air agreements and protectionist policies among member countries. The East African Community had proposed a unified aviation bloc, which would have involved negotiating air service agreements with foreign countries as a single entity. This approach would have classified flights between member countries as domestic routes, ultimately reducing airfare costs. To date, domestic air transport within the region remains unharmonized, as the regulations on the liberalization of air transport in the EAC have not yet been adopted.

As a result, the aviation industry in the region continues to be burdened by high costs and significant taxes on tickets, which can make up as much as 40 percent of the ticket price. This makes air travel less appealing to passengers, who may prefer longer road trips instead. The region has some of the highest taxes in the world, which vary from country to country. For instance, departure taxes range from \$20 in Rwanda to \$40 in Kenya and \$20 in Burundi per passenger. In Tanzania, both domestic and international flights are subject to the same tax rate of \$49, which could hinder the growth of regional EAC traffic. The taxes and charges mentioned include the 16 percent VAT on air tickets and spare parts in Kenya, taxes on jet fuel, high airport departure tax, and generally high landing fees at airports. This is what makes regional integration of air transport so difficult and expensive for travelers, especially the tourists. This makes road transport the next alternative, and most widely used mode of transport in the region.

Article 90 of the EAC Treaty focuses on roads and road transport. Subsection 90 (f) pertains to the adoption of common requirements for the insurance of goods and vehicles, which has yet to be realized. Currently, ‘the only existing common vehicle insurance is the Yellow Card within COMESA, and applies in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. Tanzania withdrew from COMESA in the year 2000’ PMRUGD. This was because Tanzania was expected to reduce tariffs for imported goods from other member states and implement zero tariff reduction by 2000, as outlined in Article 46 of the COMESA treaty. However, Tanzania encountered significant challenges in implementing these tariff reductions, leading to decreased tariff revenue collection and resulting in revenue loss that posed a threat to the national economy. Additionally, external trade was adversely affected, contributing to a trade deficit. As a result of these outcomes, among others, Tanzania withdrew from COMESA to protect local industries against the importation of goods from outside the country (Suleiman, 2019).

The Yellow Card is a cross-border motor vehicle insurance scheme designed to facilitate travel within COMESA member countries. It provides motorists with necessary third-party liability coverage when traveling from one COMESA country to another, eliminating the need for separate insurance policies for each country visited. Valid in participating COMESA member states such as Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and others, the Yellow Card ensures that drivers have the required third-party liability insurance as mandated by law in each country. It can be issued for various durations, typically from a few days to a year, depending on the motorist's travel needs. In the event of an accident, claims can be filed in the country where the accident occurred, and the local insurance company that issued the Yellow Card will collaborate with insurance companies in the involved countries to handle the claim. The Yellow Card can be obtained from authorized insurance companies within the motorist's home country and is usually issued alongside the national motor vehicle insurance policy.

Yellow Card has an influence in on tourism with several benefits and procedural framework for tourism, thereby highlighting its significance in the context of regional integration and cross-border tourism within the COMESA member countries. For example, 'it simplifies cross-border travel by obviating the necessity for multiple insurance policies, thus enhancing convenience for tour operators and motorists' PMRKEN. Having the Yellow Card ensures legal compliance by necessitating adherence to the insurance requirements of each member country, thereby fostering regulatory alignment and harmonization. Financial protection against third-party liability claims emerges as a salient feature of the COMESA Yellow Card. 'Having the Yellow Card avoids the financial burden on motorists in the event of an accident' PMRUGD. By facilitating smoother and more efficient movement of tourists within the COMESA region, the Yellow Card actively promotes regional integration, trade, and cooperation. This underlines its instrumental role in advancing the overarching objectives of efficient travel by road.

Pursuant to subsection 91 (m) of the EAC Treaty, which addresses the coordination of activities related to the construction of primary roads connecting the Partner States, ensuring adherence to common design standards, and maintaining existing road networks to those standards, the road infrastructure in the EAC is relatively good compared to other corridors in Africa. 'The road network is generally well-maintained, although there are some areas with substandard roads and significant stretches of unpaved road along certain routes' PMRKEN.

The region encompasses key corridors such as the Northern Corridor, the primary trading route in the area, running from Mombasa, and the Central Corridor that traverses Tanzania. 'The Northern Corridor is crucial in East Africa as it connects seven out of the eight EAC countries—Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, South Sudan and Somalia—to the port of Mombasa' PMRKEN. It also provides links to parts of northern Tanzania. This road provides access for tourists to visit Tsavo East and West National Parks, Amboseli National Park, and Masai Mara in Kenya, as well as Mount Kilimanjaro and Serengeti National Park in Northern Tanzania. It serves as a vital link connecting the various tourism circuits in Kenya, starting from the coastal city of Mombasa.

In Uganda, the corridor branches off toward Kigali (Rwanda) and Juba (South Sudan). There are several amazing tourist attractions to explore using this route. For example in Uganda, ‘Murchison Falls National Park is known for its beautiful waterfall and diverse wildlife, while Kidepo Valley National Park offers stunning landscapes and a wide variety of animal species’ PMRUGD. Others include the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary, a great place to see rhinos in their natural habitat, and Mabira Forest, perfect for nature walks and birdwatching. There is also Sipi Falls for those who love hiking and breathtaking waterfalls.

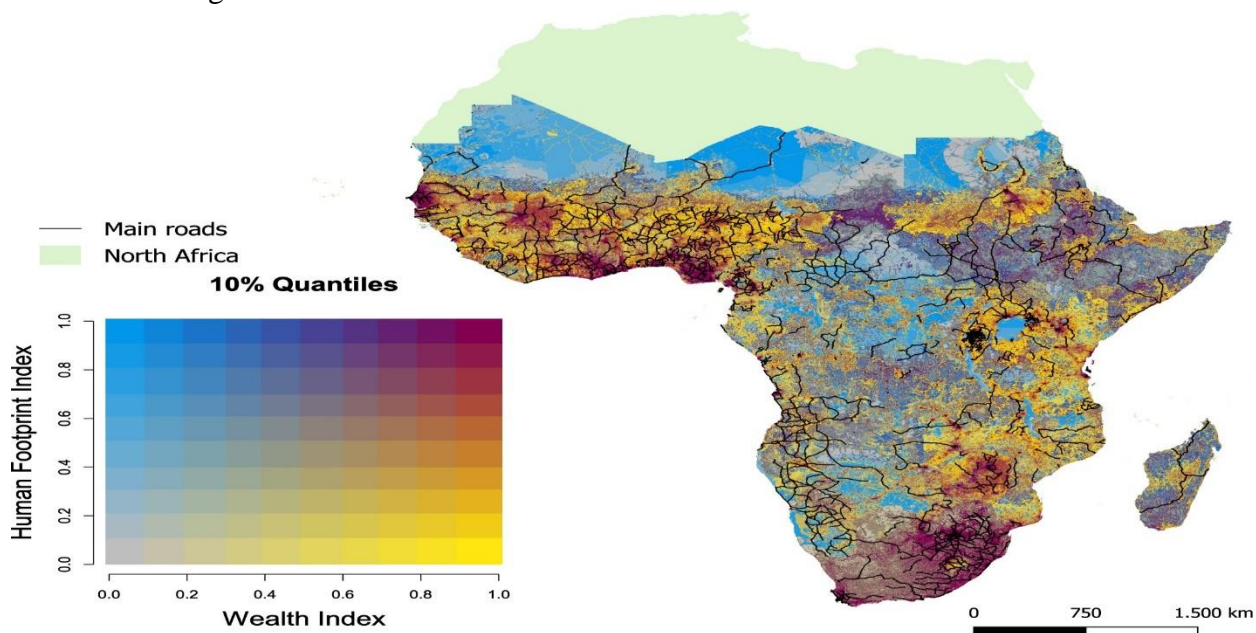


Figure 14: Main Roads

When the Northern Corridor enters Rwanda, Volcanoes National Park is famous for its mountain gorilla treks, and the Twin Lakes (Burera and Ruhondo) offer serene and picturesque surroundings. Akagera National Park is a fantastic destination for wildlife enthusiasts, with its diverse range of animals and birds to observe. The Northern Corridor is totally paved and provides good regional connectivity.

‘In the southern part of the EAC, the Central Corridor holds significant importance as it connects the port of Dar es Salaam to markets in Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and the DRC’ PMRKEN. Along the southern side of Lake Victoria, the Central Corridor route from Bujumbura to Dar es Salaam begins as a well-maintained paved road in Burundi, while the Tanzanian section, although only partially paved, is also fairly well kept.

There are regional disparities in the condition and types of corridors in East Africa. A large portion, ranging from 84% to 97%, of the Northern Corridor, which connects Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda is completely paved. The higher level of paving along the Northern Corridor is attributed to the

heavier traffic concentration. In general, transportation to Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda is more cost-effective via the Northern Corridor compared to the Central Corridor. The Northern Corridor holds a competitive advantage over the Central Corridor for Burundi, despite Bujumbura being closer to Dar es Salaam than to Mombasa.

This argument applies to the importation of goods, but may not be applicable to tourism, despite certain sections of the road being unpaved. This is due to the fact that tour vans are four by four vehicles and can easily navigate the shorter route, regardless of the road conditions.

The impact on tourism management in EAC is that the enhancement of road connectivity has a significant impact on tourism in the region. Better roads make tourist destinations more accessible, leading to reduced travel time and costs for tourists. For instance, improved road connectivity to national parks, beaches, and cultural sites in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda and Rwanda has been linked to increased tourist arrivals. With increased tourist arrivals, more revenue is generated, creating jobs, and stimulating local economies. Tourism-related businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and tour operators, have benefited from the influx of tourists facilitated by improved road infrastructure.

Similarly, improved road conditions have contribute to the safety and comfort of tourists on cross-border tourism. Driving within the region with consistent road signage and better-maintained roads have enhanced the overall travel experience, thus positively influencing tourism management. This is because integrated road networks play a crucial role in promoting the EAC as a single tourist destination. The development of regional tourist circuits, such as the Great Lakes circuit connecting attractions in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania, offers diverse experiences within a single trip, thus promoting multi-country tourism packages.

*Figure 15: Main Transport Corridors in the EAC and Tourists Attractions available*

Corridor Name	Route	Corridor Length (rounded)	Popular Tourist Attractions
Northern Corridor	Mombasa-Nairobi-Nakuru-Eldoret-Bungoma-Malaba-Bugiri-Jinja-Kampala-Masaka-Katuna/Gatuna-Kigali-Nemba/Gasenyi-Ngozi-Kayanza-Bugarama-Bujumbura	2,080 km	Maasai Mara, Amboseli National Park, Lake Nakuru, Jinja (source of the Nile), Kampala, Kigali Genocide Memorial, Bujumbura
Central Corridor	Dar es Salaam-Morogoro-Dodoma-Singida-Nzega-Tinde-Isaka-	2,170 km	Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, Gisenyi (Lake

	Lusahunga to: (i) Gisenyi via Rusumo and Kigali (ii) Bujumbura via Nyakasanza, Kobero and Gitega (iii) Masaka via Bukoba and Mutukula		Kivu), Bujumbura, Rubavu (Gorillas)
Dar es Salaam (TAZARA) Corridor	Morogoro–Iringa–Mbeya–Tuduma	1,100 km	Selous Game Reserve, Ruaha National Park, Kitulo National Park
Namanga Corridor	Iringa–Dodoma–Babati–Arusha–Namanga–Nairobi–Thika–Murang’a–Nyeri–Nanyuki–Isiolo–Marsabit–Moyale	1,800 km	Tarangire National Park, Mount Kilimanjaro, Nairobi National Park, Mount Kenya, Samburu National Reserve, Lake Turkana
Sumbwanga Corridor	Tunduma–Sumbwanga–Mpanda–Uvinza–Kasulu–Manyovu/Mugina–Makamba–Nyanza Lac–Rumonge–Bujumbura	1,260 km	Katavi National Park, Mahale Mountains National Park, Lake Tanganyika
Sirari Corridor	Biharamulo–Mwanza–Musoma–Sirari/Isebania–Kisii–Kisumu–Kakamega–Webuye–Kitale–Lodwar–Lokichokio	1,500 km	Lake Victoria, Serengeti National Park, Maasai Mara, Kakamega Forest, Lake Turkana
Coastal Corridor	Mingoyo–Dar es Salaam–Bagamoyo–Tanga–Horohoro/Lungalunga–Kwale–Mombasa–Kilifi–Malindi–Lamu	1,500 km	Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo, Tanga, Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu
Mtwara Corridor	Mtwara–Mingoyo–Masasi–Tunduru–Songea–Mbamba Bay	800 km	Mnazi Bay-Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park, Selous Game Reserve
Tanga Corridor	Tanga–Arusha–Musoma–Lake Victoria–Kampala	1,650 km	Mount Kilimanjaro, Arusha National Park, Serengeti National Park, Lake Victoria, Kampala

Gulu Corridor	Nimule–Bibia–Gulu– Lira–Soroti–Mbale– Tororo	600 km	Murchison Falls National Park, Gulu War Memorial, Sipi Falls, Mount Elgon National Park
Total EAC Road Corridor Network Length		14,460 km	

Source (Researcher, 2024).

The East African Community (EAC) recognizes the importance of streamlining rail development in the region and coordinating road and rail transport activities along the main corridors. Railway transport is deemed the second most crucial mode of transportation in the region, following road transport, and is essential for facilitating tourism along the primary transport corridors.

As a result, ‘the EAC has developed an East African Railways Master Plan to provide guidance for the future development of railway services in the region’ PMRKEN. Article 92 of the EAC treaty addresses railway transport. With regards to tourism, subsection (a) pertains to the adoption of common policies for the development of railways and railway transport in the Community; and (q) relates to the facilitation of joint utilization of railway facilities, including manufacturing, maintenance, and training facilities, to ensure their optimal use.

Tanzania's railway network spans 3,676 km and is managed by two railway systems: Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) and Tanzania – Zambia Railways (TAZARA). ‘The TAZARA railway infrastructure has faced challenges due to deteriorating tracks’ PMRTNZ, and aging rolling stock and locomotives, resulting in declining freight and passenger numbers annually. However, ongoing efforts to revamp sections of the railway lines have led to an upturn in passenger and cargo volumes.

Kenya boasts a 2,778 km rail network, with the mainline linking the Port of Mombasa to Nairobi and to the Kenya/Uganda border at Malaba. Despite a decline in freight performance, the rail network remains crucial for transporting export and import goods, handling approximately 35% of the long haul freight traffic at the Port of Mombasa. The railway has substantially reduced travel times, particularly between Nairobi and Mombasa, transforming a previously ten-hour journey into a more convenient five to six hour train ride. This enhanced accessibility has been associated with a consequent rise in domestic and international tourist visits to various regions of Kenya. The ease of travel has led to an increase in weekend and holiday trips from Nairobi to the coastal region, underscoring the railway's pivotal role in reshaping travel patterns.

‘The unique opportunity for wildlife viewing along the SGR route has emerged as a notable factor contributing to its influence on Kenya's tourism’ PMCTOKEN2. The railway's traversal through wildlife-rich areas, including the Nairobi National Park and Tsavo National Park, has provided

tourists with a distinctive dimension to their travel experience, thereby augmenting the overall appeal of visiting these destinations. Furthermore, the improved access to these parks has correlated with a surge in visitor numbers, substantiating the SGR's influence on wildlife tourism.

According to PMNKEN 'the SGR has not only reduced travel time but led to the growth in secondary tourist destinations along towns such as Voi, Mtito Andei, and Emali have experienced heightened tourist activities', spurring the development of local hospitality and service industries. This secondary ripple effect of the SGR underscores its significance in shaping not only primary tourist destinations but also peripheral economies reliant on tourism. The affordability and convenience of SGR travel as key determinants in travel preferences among tourists. 'A regular SGR ticket between Mombasa and Nairobi is approximately \$9 while for a journey that takes six hours while a regular bus ticket is never constant and can range between \$9 to \$15' PCTOKEN3. The cost-effectiveness of rail travel, coupled with the comfort and scenic view offered along the route, has positioned the SGR as an appealing option for budget-conscious travelers, reflecting its influence in the tourism transport.

The SGR's cost factor is equally pivotal in promoting domestic tourism. 'Price of affordable price of tickets encourages greater frequent exploration of the attractions along this route' PCTOKEN5. This surge in domestic tourism signifies the SGR's capacity to democratize travel experiences, expanding access to previously inaccessible destinations. 'When people start visiting a region more then this spurs infrastructure development, particularly in the improvement of related facilities such as roads and hotels near railway stations' PCTOKEN4. This ancillary development has augmented the overall tourism experience, emphasizing the broader infrastructural implications of the SGR beyond its immediate transportation function.

The railway's reputation as a safe mode of travel, especially in comparison to road transport, has significantly influenced tourists. The SGR's exemplary safety record has established it as the preferred choice for many travelers, shaping their travel behaviors and preferences. Notably, 'there have been no reported SGR accidents since its establishment seven years ago' PCTOKEN2. This has played a pivotal role in promoting Kenya as a tourist destination. The progress in upgrading the railway system have turned it into an attraction in its own right. 'I used the SGR after seeing the videos online about it...it is better than what we have in Uganda' PCTUGD1. This contributes to a positive global perception of Kenya as a nation with good transport infrastructure for tourists.

Regarding water transport, Article 93 of the EAC treaty pertains to Maritime and Ports. However, given that most of the EAC countries are landlocked, the focus of the study was on article 94, which addresses Inland waterways transport. Specifically, the study honed in on subsections (h) and (j), which involve promoting cooperation among the countries through joint ventures in inland waterways transport, including the establishment of joint shipping services and facilitating the

deployment of inland waterways vessels, and equipment to ensure efficient conveyance of all classes of traffic to and from each Partner States.

The primary inland transport hub of the East African Community (EAC) is located around Lake Victoria. As the largest lake in Africa and the main reservoir of the Nile, Lake Victoria spans three EAC countries: Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. This significant natural resource plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of these nations, particularly in the realm of tourism. The transportation network on Lake Victoria is an integral component of the region's tourism industry, facilitating movement and enhancing the overall tourist experience. Throughout history, Lake Victoria has served as a central hub for regional trade and transportation. In the colonial era, steamships operated by British companies were the primary means of transportation across the lake, connecting important ports like Kisumu (Kenya), Mwanza (Tanzania), and Entebbe (Uganda). These steamships played a crucial role in transporting goods and passengers, contributing to the growth of towns around the lake. Although the influence of the colonial period has diminished over time, the significance of maritime transport continues to be felt in the region's transportation network.

The M.V. Mpungu, the pioneering vessel of East Africa Marine Transport (EAMT), has been launched on Lake Victoria. 'Grindrod will operate this vessel, providing freight carriers with access to a secure and scheduled freight service between Uganda and Tanzania. The EAMT vessel is expected to cross the lake in eighteen hours, a significant improvement over the current journey time of three to four days on congested regional roads' PMRUGD.

Apart from preventing spoilage of fresh produce, the reduced journey times are anticipated to enhance trade. Moreover, the fuel-efficient nature of the freight vessel will help minimize CO2 equivalent emissions linked to climate change and alleviate congestion on the region's road network. 'While this initiative chiefly focuses on trade, it currently does not incorporate tourism opportunities' PMRUGD. Presently, there are no major scheduled inland vessels connecting the partner states of the East African Community (EAC) that could be utilized by tour operators. Consequently, investing in a similar secure inland vessel could significantly boost tourism in the region and reduce CO2 emissions by eliminating the need to go around the lake.

Investing in infrastructure development, including the modernization of ports, enhancement of vessel standards, and improvement of navigation systems, is essential for the advancement of lake transport. By fostering collaboration between EAC member states, with the support of international partners and private investors, we can propel these upgrades to establish a safer and more efficient transport network.

'The primary beneficiaries of the improved inland transport are the communities living in the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB), which spans Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania' PMRTNZ. The Lake Victoria

Basin supports the livelihoods of nearly 4 million people. By expanding the reach of infrastructure and offering value-added services, tourism transportation will enhance the socio-economic well-being of these communities, facilitating more efficient business activities and improving overall prosperity around Lake Victoria.

### **4.3 Research Question 3**

#### *4.3.1 How does trade integration influence tourism management in the EAC?*

Article 76 of the EAC treaty discusses the creation of a common market, which resulted in the formation of the EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP) of 2010. The common market concept aims to remove barriers to trade within the community, integrating national markets into a unified market that closely resembles an internal market. A common market is the amalgamation of two or more territories into a single territory with unrestricted movement of people, goods, labor, services, and capital, as well as the right to establish and reside. Article 1 of the EAC Treaty defines a common market as "The Partner States' markets integrated into a single market in which there is free movement of capital, labor, goods, and services."

In this study, the initial objective was to examine the demand side of free movement of people through the perspective of tourists. Objective three on trade integration aimed to investigate the supply side, with a specific focus on the free movement of labor and services. Article 10 of the CMP and the East African Community Common Market (Free Movement of Workers) Regulations, as outlined in Annex II to the CMP, ensure the freedom of movement for workers within the Community. Partner States must guarantee the unrestricted movement of workers who are citizens of other Partner States within their territories. They are also required to ensure that workers from other Partner States are not discriminated against based on their nationality in terms of employment, compensation, and other work-related conditions.

#### *4.3.2 (i)What are the requirements for East African Community (EAC) citizens engaging in employment within the tourism sector of fellow partner states? (Free movement of Labor).*

According to PMRKEN, 'Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda have abolished work permits, while it is a requirement to work in Tanzania'. This policy of abolishing the work permit requirement for East African Community (EAC) citizens by has garnered attention and sparked debates. While proponents of the policy argue that it fosters regional integration, facilitates labor mobility, and promotes economic growth within the EAC, there are certain rebuttals. Critics argue that this will result to the influx of EAC citizens into these countries, leading to increased competition for jobs, potentially displacing local workers and driving down wages. Moreover, concerns have been raised about the strain on public services and infrastructure due to the potential influx of migrants. However, there has been no evidence to such claims since the policy went into effect. Instead, these countries recorded increased tourism numbers.

What could be considered is the regulatory and administrative challenges associated with the implementation of this policy. ‘The region has not adopted a standardized framework for qualifications, although this is in progressing very slowly’, PMRUGD. Without a standardized framework for recognizing qualifications and professional standards across the EAC, there may be issues regarding the quality and compatibility of skills brought in by migrant workers. Additionally, the absence of a coherent system for monitoring and regulating labor migration could lead to exploitation of migrant workers and pose challenges for law enforcement.

While the abolishment of work permit requirements for EAC citizens by Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda represents a significant step towards regional integration, it is crucial to critically evaluate the potential ramifications of this policy. Through a comprehensive analysis of the economic, social, and regulatory considerations, policymakers can strive to strike a balance between promoting regional cooperation and addressing the legitimate concerns that have been raised regarding labor mobility and migration within the EAC.

‘The Tanzanian policy of requiring EAC citizens to obtain a work permit from the Tanzanian Immigration Department presents a barrier to labor mobility within the East African Community’ PCTOKEN2. While Tanzania may argue that these measures are necessary to protect the interests of its citizens and ensure that job opportunities are not taken by non-citizens, there are several criticisms to consider. Firstly, the EAC partner states have committed to establishing a common market, which includes the free movement of labor. By imposing stringent controls on EAC citizens seeking employment in Tanzania, the country is not fully realizing the potential benefits of regional integration, including the pooling of skilled labor from member states. Secondly, ‘the requirement for EAC citizens to demonstrate that a Tanzanian citizen cannot fill the position may be burdensome and difficult to prove’ PCTOKEN2. This places an additional administrative burden on both the prospective employee and the employer, potentially deterring qualified individuals from seeking employment in Tanzania. Furthermore, the need for a job offer, proof of qualifications, and a national identity card may hinder the process of EAC citizens seeking employment in Tanzania, especially for individuals who may be self-employed or seeking entrepreneurial opportunities.

While Tanzania's concerns regarding protecting its labor market are valid, it is essential to balance these objectives with the principles of regional integration and the overall benefits of labor mobility within the EAC. An approach that facilitates the movement of skilled labor while addressing legitimate concerns about job displacement and labor market protection would be more in line with the spirit of the EAC's integration goals.

4.3.3 (ii) *To what extent are EAC tourism employees able to traverse the territories of partner states without constraint? (Free Movement of Services).*

The ease of movement for East African Community (EAC) citizens within Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda can be attributed to the free labor movement agreements within these countries. However, Tanzania's stringent work permit requirements act as a hindrance to the free movement of EAC citizens, particularly affecting tourism workers in the region.

This issue is connected to Tanzania's labor requirements and the controversy surrounding tourist van access discussed in the first objective related to border opening reciprocity. They argue that the restrictions adhere to the 1985 agreement signed by Kenya and Tanzania, which prohibits tourist vans from both countries from accessing National Parks and Game reserves (PMRTNZ).

#### **4.4 Research Question 4**

4.4.1 *What will be the influence of political integration on tourism management in the EAC?*

4.4.1.1 *(i) How does the provision of EAC Federation affect tourism initiatives and collaboration among EAC member states?*

Article 123 of Chapter 23 in the EAC treaty pertains to cooperation in political matters. Subsection 1 states: "In order to advance the objectives of the Community as outlined in Article 5 of this Treaty, especially regarding the prospective establishment of a Political Federation of the Partner States, the Partner States shall initiate common foreign and security policies." The interpretation is that this will be a form of governance wherein authority is decentralized from a central government to lower subordinate entities. This necessitates that, in the process of federating, the federating entities must relinquish specific powers to a single central authority (Harelimana, 2011).

Advocates for the EAC Federation argue that the formation of a single large economic and political entity could help mitigate tribalism, and other socio-cultural problems, that individual countries are grappling with. According to PCTKEN3, ' a federation could contribute to preventing conflicts between neighboring countries, ultimately promoting political stability in the region and this will consequently create a safer and more appealing environment for tourist's. While advocates for political federation make compelling arguments for the potential benefits of a single large economic and political entity, it is essential to consider its criticisms, which have direct influence on tourism management.

Critics contend that imposing a federal structure may not necessarily mitigate underlying religious, tribal, and socio-cultural issues within individual countries. They argue that historical animosities and power struggles between neighboring countries are deeply rooted and may not be fully addressed by the formation of a political federation. For example, the intermittent disputes and border closures between Kenya and Tanzania have deep historical roots. The strained relationship dates back to the collapse of the 1967 treaty in 1977, which resulted in significant disagreements over the distribution of assets and liabilities. Kenya was accused of retaining all regional assets, including the fleet of the East African Airways. As a result, creating an East African Community

Federation may not fully address these longstanding issues of mistrust, and border closures will continue influencing tourism negatively.

Additionally, opponents of political federation suggest that the process of unifying different political and economic systems can introduce new complexities and challenges, potentially exacerbating existing tensions. The expectation that political federations minimize ethnic conflicts, enhance security, and promote good governance is often exemplified by countries such as Switzerland, with its diverse linguistic and cultural groups living in harmony. Nevertheless, critics may argue that federations can also amplify internal tensions by exacerbating disparities among regions and ethnic groups, as evidenced by historical and current divisions within federated nations such as India and Nigeria. If this happens, then it becomes a deterrent for potential tourists and can create uncertainties that affect tourism development and investment as the case between Uganda and Rwanda.

‘Political federations are believed to instill pride among citizens by offering a sense of belonging to a powerful country with a commanding voice on the global stage’ PCTUGD1. For instance, the European Union has enabled its member countries to collectively project a strong presence in international relations. ‘A unified voice in international relations may allow the EAC to negotiate better trade deals and policies that benefit the tourism sector as a whole’ PCTKEN1. However, a rebuttal to this perspective is that in some cases, those of larger and more powerful members may overshadow the interests of smaller or less influential member states within the EAC. ‘My worry is whether countries like Tanzania will benefit equally with Kenya being a stronger economy’ PCTTNZ2. This could lead to disparities in the distribution of tourism-related investments and infrastructure development, potentially hindering the overall growth of the industry. Moreover, differing tourism priorities and strategies among member states may create challenges in forming cohesive policies and marketing initiatives, thereby diminishing the sense of pride and voice within the federation.

Transboundary resource management, such as the sustainable conservation of Lake Victoria within the East African Community, is often touted as a key resource that would benefit from a political federation. ‘A political federation could provide a framework for unified and coordinated management of the lake and its surrounding resources, leading to more effective conservation efforts. This would be particularly advantageous for tourism, as Lake Victoria is a significant attraction in the region’, PCTOUKEN1. The harmonization of regulations and policies under a federation could enhance tourism development around the lake, leading to economic benefits for the member states. However, skeptics may argue that in federated regions, conflicting interests among member states could hinder effective resource management. Additionally, insufficient enforcement mechanisms within the federation may lead to challenges in addressing environmental degradation and ensuring equitable resource distribution. ‘Tourism development around Lake Victoria could lead to increased human activity and potential environmental degradation, posing a threat to the delicate ecosystem of the lake, PCTUGD1.

Political integration would also allow for the free movement of people within a federation, such as the East African Federation, promotes cultural exchange and fosters a sense of unity among member states. ‘A federation will allow individuals to explore new job opportunities, seek higher education, or simply experience life in different parts of EAC’ PMRKEN2. With the facilitation of free movement, ‘tourists from member states would be more inclined to explore the diverse tourist attractions across the East African Community, leading to a potential redistribution of tourism traffic within the region’ PCTOUGD2. Moreover, the influx of individuals seeking new job opportunities or higher education could contribute to an expanded tourism workforce with a broader array of skills and cultural understanding, thus enhancing the overall tourism experience for visitors. ‘For instance, a Ugandan tour operator may work in Kenya, contributing to the diversity of the workforce and gaining valuable cross-cultural experiences’ PCTOUGD1.

However, critics argue that unrestricted movement of people can lead to social and economic challenges, such as strains on public services and job competition in certain regions. This would necessitate a reevaluation and potential restructuring of current tourism management strategies to accommodate the increased volume of travelers. Additionally, concerns about national security and border control may arise, especially in the context of heightened security threats and refugee movements in the EAC.

The right to employment within a federation provides individuals with access to a broader job market, increasing the potential for career advancement and skills development. A Kenyan tour guide, for example, may find employment opportunities in the Rwanda that align with their expertise and aspirations, contributing to their professional growth and enhancing the workforce in the host country. By enabling professionals to pursue career prospects aligned with their expertise and aspirations, the EAC contributes to the enhancement of the tourism workforce, ultimately elevating the quality of services and experiences offered to visitors. This, in turn, supports the overarching goal of promoting the EAC as a competitive and alluring tourism destination on the global stage.

Opponents of unrestricted employment rights may argue that it could lead to labor market distortions, particularly in regions where job markets are already saturated. They may also express concerns about the potential displacement of local workers and decreases in wage levels, highlighting the need for safeguarding the interests of all individuals participating in the labor market. ‘Kenyans are considered to have higher qualifications in the region and there should be a policy to ensure they do not take all the job opportunities’ PCTOUTNZ3. Balancing cross-border employment opportunities with the preservation of equity and fairness for local workers within the tourism sector constitutes a critical focal point that demands scholarly attention and policy deliberation within the EAC.

In terms of residence rights, a federation would offer individuals the opportunity to live and settle in different member states without facing complex immigration procedures. For instance, a

Tanzanian retiree may choose to relocate to Rwanda to enjoy a different lifestyle and climate, contributing to the diversity of communities and enriching cultural exchange within the union. With easier mobility and settlement between member states, it is likely that tourism within the East African Community would experience a boost. ‘Individuals who relocate to another member state within the federation may attract friends and relatives from their home country to visit and explore the new environment’ PCTOUKEN2. This could result in an increase in intra-regional tourism as people take advantage of the ease of travel and residence.

The criticism with this is that it may raise concerns about the potential strain on social welfare systems and public infrastructure because of unrestricted residence rights. The argument is that diversity of communities and enriched cultural exchange resulting from the relocation of individuals within the East African Community could also attract unsustainably high number of tourists interested in experiencing and learning about different cultures within a relatively small geographical area leading to over tourism. Over tourism occurs when there are too many visitors in a particular destination, leading to negative impacts on the environment, local communities, and infrastructure. This can include overcrowding at popular tourist sites, increased traffic and pollution, rising housing costs due to short-term rentals, and general disruption of everyday life for residents. Over tourism can also have negative effects on the natural environment, cultural heritage, and overall quality of the visitor experience.

Ownership of property across partner states facilitates cross-border investment and contributes to the overall economic development of the union. ‘A Kenyan entrepreneur, for instance, may invest in real estate in Uganda, diversifying their portfolio and stimulating economic activity in the host country, leading to the development of tourism infrastructure such as hotels, resorts, and recreational facilities’ PCTUGD2. This cross-border investment can contribute to the overall improvement of tourism facilities and services, making the region more attractive to both domestic and international tourists.

But critics may caution against potential speculative real estate practices that could lead to property market bubbles and exacerbate housing affordability issues. They may also advocate for measures to prevent disproportionate influences of foreign investment on local property markets, aiming to maintain housing accessibility and affordability for residents. However, if property market bubbles lead to inflated tourism-related costs, it may deter potential visitors and affect the overall competitiveness of the region as a tourist destination.

#### **4.5 Research Question 5**

What are the possible solutions for addressing tourism management within EAC regional integration frameworks?

The research gap on free movement can be addressed through facilitative visa policies. To boost tourism arrivals in the EAC, partner states should periodically assess their visa policies and border procedures among citizens. This evaluation aims to determine the necessity of all information requested during visa applications for security purposes, and to identify potential enhancements for efficiency and improved travel experiences. By periodically reviewing visa policies and border procedures, they can ensure that they are not imposing unnecessary barriers to tourism. Streamlining visa processes and border procedures can make it easier and more convenient for tourists to visit the region, ultimately leading to increased tourism arrivals. This can have a positive influence on the local economies by boosting tourism-related businesses and creating job opportunities, thus contributing to the overall growth and development of the East African Community. For example, an excellent starting point for international tourists could be cooperation between the public and private sectors to allow authentication and verification processes during flight booking by using Advanced Passenger Information within the local laws. Another collaboration could be within the government to allow the Tourism Ministry to be part of the decision-making process for which regions should be facilitated based on their source markets.

In order to streamline border procedures across the Partner States, the study proposes implementing advanced online submission for tourists and tour vans. While Kenya and Rwanda have eliminated the need for written forms at border crossings, Uganda still requires individuals to fill out paperwork before submitting their travel documents to the immigration officer. This requirement has led to some individuals offering assistance to illiterate travelers for a fee. Furthermore, those who can read and write often find themselves in need of a pen, with opportunistic individuals willing to rent out their pens at inflated prices. The cost of purchasing a pen under such circumstances can be exorbitant.

Despite the progress in easing EAC travel restrictions, some countries continue to insist on paper visas, while others provide visas upon arrival. However, these policies have drawbacks and are not the most efficient from a security and effectiveness standpoint. For instance, paper-based visas require potential tourists to apply at a consulate, incurring financial and time costs. However, the security benefits for low-risk regions are not significant or efficient. Applicants sometimes have to travel long distances to apply through a consulate of the country they intend to visit. Similarly, the issuance of visas on arrival also does not significantly contribute to national security since the traveler would have already entered the country. From a security standpoint, if an individual had malicious intentions, they could potentially collaborate with airport workers to carry out their plans. Additionally, if a member of a group of regular tourists or a family with a questionable past is denied a visa upon arrival, it would negatively impact the entire group's holiday experience. This sort of situation could tarnish the destination's reputation and reduce confidence among potential travelers in the future.

Given the security concerns, eliminating visa procedures in the EAC is impractical. Therefore, alternative solutions should be explored. Abolishing all paper based visas offered in the EAC and switching to electronic visas is recommended as an effective policy that guarantees a secure and convenient travel experience. Unlike traditional paper-based visas, electronic visas can be applied for and supporting documents can be submitted online. Additionally, payment and the subsequent approval or rejection can all be conveniently managed online. This modern approach will allow tourists to apply from anywhere with an internet connection, without the inconvenience of traveling to locate an Embassy.

Consideration could be given to the use of third-party visas as a solution. This involves adopting the robust security protocols and procedures of third parties. For instance, Mexico in 2010 allowed entry to foreign nationals holding valid visas or permanent residence from the United States. Building on its success, the policy was extended in 2016 to encompass Schengen visas from the United Kingdom, Canada, and Japan (WTTC, 2019). It may be argued that the EAC Partner States could adopt a similar approach, as conducting additional background checks on individuals cleared by the United States as posing no security threat might not yield significant security benefits. It is simply a waste of time and money spent on duplication of tasks instead of saving resources for other duties.

Indeed, a school of thought would oppose such a policy arguing that it would lead to the loss of revenue from visa fees. However, this argument is negated by experience from Mexico. Since introducing this policy in Mexico, international tourism arrivals have grown from 23.4 million in 2010 to 41.4 million in 2018 (WTTC, 2019). The cumulative effect such a policy provides makes more economic sense than hanging on to revenue generated by visa fees. It is practically impossible to have a one-day trip given the distance between EAC and these countries, meaning that their length of stay will be longer, resulting in more money spent in the region and generating more revenue for the governments. This policy has also been tried and tested in the UAE and China.

UAE and China use transit visa exemptions for travellers with a valid plane ticket to another destination. In the case of UAE, by 2018, travellers were exempt from entry fees for the first 48 hours, with the possibility of extending the entry fee to 96 hours at a small fee. China enabled a 144-hour Transit Visa Exemption in selected cities such as Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Nanjing, possibly expanding to Beijing and Tianjin by December 2017. The Visa was available to citizens of 53 countries with 72hrs validity. This would be an excellent opportunity for a country like Kenya, which acts as the primary transit destination in the EAC. For a very long time, Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) has been a significant airline destination and landing region.

Located in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, JKIA is only minutes away from the only national park of its kind in the entire world; Nairobi National Park is the only protected area located within 5km from the Central Business District of a capital city. This kind of visa policy would be suitable

for increasing wildlife safaris to the park by travellers in transit, hence generating more revenue from the park entry fees. Other major attractions next to the National Park would benefit immensely from such a policy. These include David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Giraffe Centre, Karen Blixen Museum, Nairobi National Museum, Bomas of Kenya, Kenyatta International Conference Centre, Ng'ong Hills, and Karura Forest Reserve, among others.

Regional bilateral and multilateral agreements for registered travellers, especially for business purposes, can also improve the efficiency and security of the experience. Such arrangements remove the need for individual visa applications, allowing multiple entries in participating economies for a given period during which the card is valid while saving valuable costs and time. Members enjoy preferential processing on arrival and exit through special counters at the airports in participating economies. This would suit business travelers and elevate the EAC region's image as a significant business tourism destination with two major conference centres in Africa: Kenyatta International Conference Centre and Kigali Convention Center.

Instead of viewing liberalizations of the EAC aviation as a threat, partner states should embrace collaborative partnerships with other carriers; regional airlines within the East African Community (EAC) can unlock numerous benefits. Such partnerships could lead to an expansion of their global reach through access to new markets and routes. This expansion facilitates increased tourists, passenger traffic and cargo volumes, potentially resulting in heightened revenue streams for the participating airlines. Collaborative partnerships will also allow regional carriers to tap into cost-saving opportunities, such as joint procurement and shared operational resources. Additionally, these partnerships can lead to knowledge transfer and collaboration on best practices, ultimately enhancing the overall competitiveness and sustainability of regional airlines. Overall, embracing collaborative partnerships presents an opportunity for regional carriers to navigate the liberalization of aviation in the EAC and enhance traveling for tourists.

In addition, advocacy for the interests of national carriers in regional and international forums by the governments of Tanzania and Uganda is essential for promoting fair and equitable treatment for their airlines in the liberalized market. This will enable these governments to ensure that the concerns and challenges facing their airlines are addressed in a balanced and just manner and contribute to the development of air transport for tourists in the region. This will foster a healthy competition while safeguarding the interests of their national carriers, and in turn, can lead to improved connectivity, increased tourism, and enhanced travel experiences for tourists within the East African Community.

Focusing on customer experience and quality of service in the air transport industry within the East African Community can also address the fear of liberalization. National carriers can differentiate themselves from larger carriers through exceptional customer service, unique routes, and an emphasis on the overall travel experience. This is particularly important for the East African

Community's tourism sector as it can help to establish the region as a favorable travel destination by providing reliable and enjoyable air transport services.

Carving out a niche in the market through superior customer experience will also allow these airlines to contribute to the overall growth and development of the tourism industry in the East African Community. This could lead to increased tourist arrivals, higher visitor satisfaction, and greater economic benefits for the region. This can also be approached through diversification of services. Options such as cargo transportation, chartered flights, and other non-traditional revenue streams airlines can reduce reliance solely on passenger traffic.

Investing in modern airport facilities and air traffic management systems can equally enhance the overall competitiveness of smaller airlines, making them more attractive to passengers and more efficient in their operations. This improvement in air transport infrastructure would support tourism in the East African Community by facilitating easier and more convenient travel for tourists. Enhanced airport facilities and air traffic management systems can lead to improved connectivity, increased capacity, and better operational efficiency, which in turn can attract more tourists to the region. Additionally, efficient and well-maintained air transport infrastructure can contribute to a positive overall travel experience for tourists, thereby supporting the growth of tourism within the East African Community.

When it comes to road transport, improving road infrastructure and reducing roadblocks and random police checks will greatly enhance the efficiency of tourist transportation. The frequent occurrences of roadblocks and random police checks across the EAC as reported by the PMRKEN, have led to increased delays for tour vans. By addressing these issues, the travel time for tourists can be significantly reduced, resulting in a more seamless and enjoyable travel experience. This will in turn positively influence the tourism industry by fostering greater satisfaction among tourists and potentially increasing the number of visitors to the region.

The establishment of a common regional EAC insurance scheme, akin to the Yellow Card in COMESA, would enhance the landscape of tourism transport by road across the region. Such a policy holds promise in mitigating the financial costs and time commitments associated with navigating the intricate bureaucratic procedures linked to obtaining insurance when traversing national borders within the EAC. Consequently, by streamlining and standardizing insurance requirements, this initiative would ease cross-border travel and facilitate a more seamless tourism experience, thereby contributing to the enrichment of the regional tourism sector.

The development of infrastructure plays a pivotal role in fostering regional tourism value chains in Africa. As highlighted by the World Bank, the presence of robust transportation networks, including well-maintained roads, airports, and railways, is indispensable for facilitating seamless access to diverse attractions across regions. This enables tourists to traverse the continent with ease, thereby contributing to the growth of the tourism sector. Moreover, investments in hospitality infrastructure, encompassing hotels, restaurants, and entertainment facilities, are paramount in

ensuring that tourists are provided with a comfortable and enjoyable experience. Research has consistently shown that regions boasting well-developed infrastructure are more adept at attracting a higher influx of tourists, consequently amplifying the economic benefits derived from tourism.

The establishment of a comprehensive infrastructure network in Africa not only serves to bolster the tourism industry but also acts as a catalyst for overall economic development. Adequate transportation infrastructure benefits tourists, but also facilitates the movement of goods and services, thus stimulating trade and commerce within and beyond national borders. Additionally, the presence of modern hospitality facilities contributes to enhancing the overall attractiveness of a region, thereby positioning it as a competitive tourist destination. This, in turn, has the potential to drive job creation, foster local enterprise development, and elevate living standards within communities.

However, physical infrastructure alone will not benefit the tourism sector without a supportive policy framework. The creation of an enabling environment for the growth of the tourism sector is heavily influenced by governmental policies that offer incentives, regulatory frameworks, and strategic planning support. One of the key points highlighted in the literature is the impact of policies that facilitate ease of travel. For example, research has demonstrated that visa-free or visa-on-arrival arrangements have a notably positive effect on tourist arrivals. Simplifying the entry process into a country can result in an increase in tourist visits, thereby bolstering the tourism industry within the region. Thus, policies aimed at easing travel restrictions can act as a catalyst for enhancing tourism.

Furthermore, regulatory measures are crucial in ensuring the quality and safety of tourism services. When destinations implement rigorous regulations to uphold high service and safety standards, it leads to a favorable reputation for the region. This, in turn, promotes repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth promotion. The literature makes it evident that policies focusing on the regulation of tourism services are pivotal in establishing and upholding a positive image for the region, consequently contributing to the sustained growth of the tourism sector.

Infrastructure integration must also consider stakeholder collaboration because this is a critical factor in the development of tourism clusters. The success of regional tourism value chains is often contingent on the cooperation and coordination of various stakeholders, including tour operators, local communities, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Research indicates that collaborative efforts among these entities result in the more effective and efficient utilization of resources, ultimately enhancing the overall tourist experience.

Stakeholder collaboration in infrastructure integration involve local communities. Local communities play a pivotal role in providing unique cultural experiences and products that contribute to the allure of a tourism destination. Their participation ensures that tourism

development is inclusive and beneficial to the local population. By integrating local communities into the infrastructure and tourism value chain, destinations can offer authentic and immersive experiences to visitors, thereby enriching the overall tourism product.

The engagement of local communities in tourism development not only enhances the authenticity of the tourist experience but also contributes to the sustainable growth of the destination. Through stakeholder collaboration in infrastructure integration, the diverse needs and perspectives of the local population can be taken into account, leading to the creation of tourism offerings that align with the community's values and traditions. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and pride among local residents, promoting the preservation of cultural heritage and natural resources, which are vital for the long-term sustainability of tourism clusters.

What came out from this study under EAC political integration pillar was the structure of the organization. The debate over sovereignty and methods of economic integration has been a subject of significant political discussions at international level. One of the key points of contention revolves around the competing ideologies of intergovernmentalism and supranationalism. Intergovernmentalism suggests that member states maintain their sovereignty while cooperating on common goals, whereas supranationalism involves a collective exercise of sovereignty by member states. This distinction has far-reaching implications for regional governance and the balance of power between national and regional institutions.

Proponents of supranationalism argue that pooling sovereignty at the regional level can lead to more effective decision-making and policy implementation. In this framework, laws passed at the regional level take precedence over national legislation, and member states and their citizens are bound by these decisions. This principle of direct effect is seen as a means to achieve greater unity and coherence in policy implementation across the region. However, critics raise concerns about the potential erosion of democratic accountability and transparency in supranational decision-making processes. The shift of sovereignty to regional bodies could weaken democratic control and favor the interests of powerful groups operating at the regional level.

The European Union (EU) experience has provided valuable insights into the complexities of supranational governance. While some initially, and more so, viewed supranationalism as a precursor to a federal political structure, more recent perspectives emphasize the need for a nuanced approach to power-sharing across various levels of governance. This calls for careful consideration of democratic participation, transparency, and accountability in supranational decision-making. The absence of these safeguards could exacerbate inequalities and have adverse implications for poverty and food security.

Intergovernmentalism is a concept characterized by the absence of sharing of sovereignty among member states, with each state retaining a veto on the application of regional agreements. This

framework necessitates close coordination of national policies, often overseen by intergovernmental bodies that typically lack independent power. In the context of developing countries, intergovernmental integration bodies are commonly observed, highlighting the prevalence of this approach in global governance.

One prominent feature of intergovernmentalism is the absence of robust enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with common rules by member states. This weakness raises concerns about the effectiveness of intergovernmental bodies in achieving their objectives. However, to address this limitation, modern agreements increasingly incorporate dispute settlement procedures aimed at resolving difficulties that may arise. This adaptation reflects an awareness of the need to bolster the efficacy of intergovernmental arrangements by providing mechanisms for conflict resolution and ensuring adherence to established rules.

The insistence on decision-making by consensus and the lack of independent enforcement mechanisms within intergovernmentalism highlight its reliance on cooperation and consensus among member states. While this may lead to challenges in achieving swift and decisive action, the emphasis on sovereignty and national autonomy underscores the significance placed on respecting the interests and perspectives of individual member states. In this sense, intergovernmentalism serves as a reflection of the complex dynamics inherent in international relations, where the pursuit of collective goals must navigate the diverse priorities and considerations of sovereign entities.

The concept of variable speed and variable geometry in the context of regional trade agreements (RTAs) has emerged as a response to the challenges posed by the widening integration and the increasing diversity of member states. Intergovernmentalism, while providing a framework for cooperation, has been criticized for its potential to hinder progress due to the slowest member state setting the pace. This is particularly relevant as RTAs expand to encompass a larger number of participants, making it more challenging to achieve consensus on deeper integration.

Variable speed, as a concept, allows all members to commit to common objectives while providing flexibility for some members to progress at a slower pace. Instead of impeding the advancement of all members based on the pace of the slowest, variable speed permits certain member states to move forward with common policies, while others can catch up when ready. This approach prevents the inertia of a few from hindering the collective progress and allows for a more dynamic and adaptable integration process.

On the other hand, variable geometry involves sub-groups of members pursuing deeper integration and cooperation on specific issues, while other members choose to remain outside these initiatives permanently. This approach recognizes the diverse objectives and priorities of member states within a larger framework, accommodating varying levels of commitment to integration. The

concept of variable geometry is especially pertinent in contexts with multiple economic groupings and overlapping memberships, where different integration objectives need to be harmonized.

The EU's experience in managing a larger and more diverse membership has underscored the significance of these concepts. The application of variable speed and variable geometry in designing RTAs offers valuable insights for addressing the complexities of integration, particularly in the context of developing countries. By allowing for differentiated integration paths and accommodating diverse interests, these concepts provide a framework for more inclusive and adaptive approaches to regional cooperation.

#### **4.6 Unexpected findings**

In the course of analyzing the study, two unexpected findings emerged that are crucial in understanding issues related to regional integration and tourism management in the East African Community (EAC). These findings pertain to the imbalance and stability of the EAC, as well as the problem with the EAC subsidiarity principle.

##### *4.6.1 Will an unbalanced EAC remain stable?*

It is understood that an unstable EAC has no benefit to tourism management, and the stability of regional agreements generates significant debate in political science literature. A key point of contention revolves around the role of a dominant country such as Kenya, and its impact on the sustainability of the agreement. Mattli argues that a benevolent dominant country is crucial for the long-term success of a regional agreement. It is believed that economically powerful states are crucial as the driving force behind regional integration, highlighting their ability to provide public goods such as regional peace, stability, and order, which are essential for the success of the agreement. The dominant member, or regional hegemon, is likely to bear a disproportionate share of the costs associated with these public goods, thus facilitating agreement on distributional issues and ensuring enforcement of cooperation agreements to prevent free rider problems.

However, an opposing viewpoint challenges the notion that a regional hegemon enhances the stability of regional agreements. Critics argue that the presence of a dominant member within the agreement can lead to concerns among other members about the distribution of benefits. There are fears that the hegemon may exploit the agreement, a common issue attributed to Kenya, to extend its economic and political influence, undermining the trust and cooperation among the Partner states. This argument gains support from the experiences of developing country regional groupings, particularly where large size is accompanied by wide income disparities. In such cases, the negative effects of the dominant member's influence are exacerbated, potentially leading to instability within the region.

The debate on the role of regional hegemons is complex and multifaceted, with evidence supporting both perspectives. Understanding the dynamics of dominant members within regional trade agreements is essential for policymakers and scholars seeking to promote sustainable and

effective regional integration in the EAC. Further research and analysis are necessary to comprehensively assess the impact of Kenya and Tanzania on the stability and success of EAC, taking into account factors such as economic disparities, political influence, and the provision of public goods within the agreements.

In addition, the implications of institutional design at the EAC is crucial in understanding this aspect. The analysis suggests that EAC is an intergovernmental organization, with limited evidence of countries willing to relinquish authority to supranational body. This lack of commitment institutions, as emphasized by Mattli, may weaken the sustainability of EAC. Moreover, the role of the private sector as a driving force for further integration is crucial for sustainability, with bottom-up pressures seeking economic advantage being more effective than top-down considerations pursuing political goals.

In understanding the stability of EAC, there needs to be an emphasis on the importance of flexibility in setting integration ambitions, including the potential value of variable speed and variable geometry formulations, where partner states have overlapping memberships and varying integration objectives. Distinctions should be made between regional integration based on the exchange of trade preferences and policy coordination, aimed at promoting resource allocation efficiency and intensifying competition such as the East African Tourist Visa agreement, and regional cooperation, where the primary objective is to ensure the supply of regional public goods such as the EAC.

The other aspect in considering stability of EAC is the regulatory co-ordination, particularly as tariff barriers have decreased and differences in national regulations have emerged as potential obstacles to trade. This has led to the consideration of regulatory co-ordination strategies within Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) such as the European Travel Commission to minimize the impact of varying national regulations on market segmentation. Such a body does not exist in the EAC, leading to bureaucratic regulations in the tourism sector when crossing one partner state to the other.

One of the primary debates in regulatory co-operation is the choice between harmonization of regulations and mutual recognition of national standards. Harmonization involves adopting the same regulations and standards across the region, while mutual recognition allows for the acceptance of national standards and conformity testing procedures within each member state. The EU's experience indicates that mutual recognition may only be viable when the differences between national approaches are not substantial, hence the challenges currently faced. This raises concerns about the potential for ferocious competition if firms lobby for less stringent regulations to compete with those in more lenient regulatory environments. This has been evident in the EAC where Kenya and Tanzania have from time to time banned tour vans from the other state due to conflicting regulations.

The empirical evidence on the benefits of regulatory co-operation remains limited. However, it is suggested that harmonization can be a means of improving national standards if they are suboptimal or have been influenced by protectionist interests as is the case in EAC. Conversely, harmonization may lead to a trade-off between the gains from integrated markets and the costs of deviating from nationally optimal standards, particularly in agreements involving both developed and developing economies. This trade-off is especially pronounced in areas such as social or environmental standards, where differences in standards may be economically justified.

It is important to recognize that there are both gains and costs associated with this regulatory co-operation. While there are benefits to be derived from regional harmonization, particularly where national regulations can be enhanced or are excessively burdensome, the trade-offs involved in departing from nationally desirable regulations must also be considered. A good example is abandoning national visas and loss of visa fees, for regional visa regimes. This is particularly relevant for Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, as they weighed the advantages of harmonizing EAC tourist visa against the potential benefits of national visa policies. The issue of regulatory co-operation within RTAs presents complex challenges and trade-offs. Further research and empirical evidence will be crucial in informing the development of effective regulatory co-ordination strategies that balance the interests of all participating EAC countries. (Mathews, 2003)

In the EAC partner states, economic disparities has prompted the search for new policy instruments to address this disparity. One proposed approach is the implementation of multispeed arrangements, which would allow weaker members of the group more time to liberalize their economies. This could potentially alleviate some of the economic imbalances and reduce the fear of polarization within the grouping. Additionally, compensation schemes have been suggested as a possible tool to address economic disparities, providing financial support or incentives to the weaker members to help them catch up with their stronger counterparts. These policy instruments present potential solutions to the challenges posed by economic imbalances within the EAC, offering a sustainable approach to addressing the issue of imbalanced regional agreements.

The stability of the EAC can also be determined by the dispute resolution mechanism enshrined in the Treaty. The need to strengthen dispute settlement mechanisms and ensure policy credibility in the context of regional trade and investment agreements has been raised. Regional integration scholars have emphasized the importance of establishing robust mechanisms to address disputes that may arise between states and tourism investors, as well as between signatory countries. Without effective dispute settlement mechanisms, there is a risk of undermining the credibility of the agreements and eroding trust among investors. This is particularly pertinent in the context of economic integration measures, where investors need assurance that such measures will not be arbitrarily reversed, and that barriers to regional markets will not be re-instituted overnight. Unfortunately, this study does not present the EAC as having a robust dispute resolution

mechanism, based on the tourism disputes, arbitrary boarder closures, and disregard of EACJ cases.

One of the central arguments put forth in the literature is that the lack of strong dispute settlement mechanisms can deter foreign direct investment (FDI) and hinder economic integration efforts. Investors seek stability and predictability in the regulatory environment, and the absence of credible mechanisms to address disputes can introduce uncertainty and deter investment flows, in key tourism services such as budget airlines. This has implications not only for individual investors but also for the overall goal of fostering regional integration and tourism management.

Moreover, scholars have highlighted the relationship between policy credibility and the long-term success of integration measures. When policy credibility is in question, there is a risk that countries may backtrack on their commitments to open markets and fair treatment of investors. This can create a climate of uncertainty and reluctance among potential investors, ultimately undermining the objectives of regional integration initiatives. Therefore, ensuring policy credibility in the EAC is not only crucial for attracting tourism investment but also for sustaining the momentum of regional integration over time.

In light of these arguments, it is evident that stability of EAC relies on its institutional design, flexibility in regional integration, regulatory co-ordination, economic disparity, strengthening dispute settlement mechanisms and ensuring policy credibility are essential components of effective and stable regional integration in the EAC. The study underscores the need for proactive measures to build and maintain trust among tourism investors and partner states, thereby contributing to the success and sustainability of EAC regional integration efforts and tourism management.

#### **4.7 The Problem with EAC Subsidiarity Principle**

The operational principles outlined in Article 7 of the East African Community (EAC) Treaty significantly influence the direction and function of the community. Among these principles, the concept of subsidiarity (outlined in Article 7(1)(d)) emphasizes multi-level participation and involvement of various stakeholders in the process of integration within the EAC framework.

Subsidiarity, as defined in the EAC Treaty, aims to ensure that decisions are made as close to citizens as possible by evaluating whether actions at the community level are justified compared to what could be done at the national or regional level. This principle promotes the participation of a diverse group of stakeholders in the integration process, ensuring that decisions are carried out at the most appropriate level closest to the people. It further encourages greater local input and decentralized governance.

However, a challenge with the principle of subsidiarity lies in its susceptibility to different legal interpretations. Some argue that it mirrors the sentiments of Article 7(1)(a), which emphasizes citizen participation in the EAC. This article underscores the importance of cooperation centered around people, ensuring that the development of the EAC is shaped by the active involvement of East African citizens, especially the residents in tourism destinations, and local tourism businesses. Thus, the principle of subsidiarity, although aiming to foster efficient governance and respect the autonomy of partner states while promoting regional integration, could be seen as overlapping with the principle of citizen participation.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the subsidiarity principle in the EAC Treaty raises questions about how it balances the distribution of powers and community participation. The concept of subsidiarity, particularly in the context of the European Union (EU), has received significant attention in the literature. Defined in the Treaty of Maastricht, subsidiarity addresses the allocation of powers and responsibilities between regional and national (or sub-national) levels. The debate around subsidiarity questions which powers should be allocated upwards to the regional level and which should be retained at the national or sub-national levels. It emphasizes that the EU should only intervene in areas beyond its exclusive competence if objectives cannot be effectively achieved by individual member states and are better addressed at the community level due to the scale or effects of the proposed action. This debate raises important considerations about the practical, legal and broader implementation of the principle of subsidiarity within the EAC and similar regional organizations.

Although the EAC wanted to adopt a practical definition of subsidiarity by ensuring that decisions are made as close to the citizens as possible, an ongoing challenge with their definition is the lack of a local-level mechanism similar to that of the EU. Economists within the EU have examined the distribution of powers among different levels of government using the framework of multi-tier government economics. They posit that government's stabilization and redistribution functions are best executed at the regional level, whereas the allocation function is more effectively carried out at local levels, catering to diverse preferences for public goods. It's worth noting that certain public goods, such as tourism and environmental preservation, may align more closely with the preferences of local communities and therefore are better addressed at the local level. However, exceptions are made in cases where allocation decisions have spillover effects or entail economies of scale such as tourism marketing, necessitating decision-making at the regional level to internalize externalities and capitalize on scale economies.

It is crucial to consider efficiency when allocating powers for regional integration, but we must also take into account values like accountability and democratic involvement. The involvement of supranational institutions can present challenges to democratic participation and accountability, as seen in the EU's experience. An example is the issue of residual powers which is not explicitly provided for in the regional union's treaty, leading to differing interpretations about the exercise

of powers at the union level. Some argue for a broader scope, while others emphasize deliberate constraints to union-level powers. The EU Treaty of Maastricht incorporates the subsidiarity principle, highlighting the EU's intervention in areas where action by member states alone may be ineffective, and where EU action could be more effective. This intentional limitation aims to ensure that powers are exercised at the most effective level while maintaining accountability and democratic participation.

The East African Community (EAC) faces several challenges in the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity, going by their own definition. This is highlighted by the lack of direct election of East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) members, centralized policy making, absence of regional offices, and limited stakeholder involvement. These issues signify a gap in democratic participation and accountability within the EAC's governance structures. The current process of nominating EALA members through political parties restricts direct democratic participation and reduces the accountability of the EALA members to the populace they represent. Moreover, the centralized policy making at the EAC headquarters in Tanzania disconnects decision-making from the diverse local contexts and needs of the member states and their citizens. The lack of regional offices further hinders community participation and limits access for citizens and local stakeholders to engage with and influence the EAC's policy-making process, particularly key issues related to tourism management. Additionally, the current structure of the EAC does not effectively facilitate widespread stakeholder involvement, which is essential according to the principle of subsidiarity.

To address these shortcomings and align more closely with the principle of subsidiarity, the EAC could consider implementing specific solutions. One is that the EAC could reform the process to allow direct elections of EALA members by the citizens of member states. This step would enhance democratic legitimacy and the accountability of the EALA members. Secondly, the establishment of mechanisms that allow for decentralized decision-making processes would enable more input from regional and local levels. Decentralization of policy making would ensure that decisions are made in closer proximity to the citizens affected, thereby promoting democratic participation. Thirdly, the EAC could address the absence of regional offices by setting them up across member states. This would facilitate community participation and ensure that local concerns are addressed more effectively. Finally, to enhance stakeholder engagement, the EAC should create platforms and processes that ensure the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including civil society, local governments, and private sector entities, in the policy-making process. By taking these steps, the EAC can better adhere to the principle of subsidiarity, thereby ensuring that its governance structures are more democratic, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of its citizens.

The proposed reforms within the East African Community (EAC) have significant implications for the tourism sector within the region. By allowing direct elections of East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) members by the citizens of member states, the EAC would enhance democratic

legitimacy and accountability. This, in turn, could lead to more stable and transparent governance, which is conducive to fostering a favorable environment for tourism development. Additionally, the establishment of mechanisms for decentralized decision-making processes would ensure that policies related to the tourism sector are made in closer proximity to the citizens affected. This localization of decision-making could lead to more tailored and efficient policies that address the specific needs and concerns of local communities and stakeholders involved in the tourism industry.

Furthermore, the presence of regional offices across member states, as proposed, would facilitate community participation and enable tourism-related concerns to be addressed effectively at the local level. This could result in improved coordination of tourism initiatives, better infrastructure development, and enhanced promotion of cultural and natural heritage within each member state. Moreover, the creation of platforms and processes to ensure the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including civil society and local governments, in the policy-making process would lead to a more inclusive approach to tourism development. This inclusive approach is crucial for sustainable tourism practices, as it allows for the integration of local knowledge, traditions, and values into tourism strategies, thus creating authentic and meaningful experiences for tourists.

In essence, the implementation of the proposed solutions within the EAC not only aligns with the principle of subsidiarity and promotes democratic governance, but it also has the potential to positively impact tourism in the region. The reforms could lead to more participatory, locally responsive, and inclusive tourism development strategies, ultimately contributing to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector within the East African Community.

## 5 CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

Regional integration efforts have mainly been directed toward boosting industrial growth, leaving tourism management largely overlooked. This is concerning because tourism is a key contributor to the economies of many nations and regional groupings. In the case of the East African Community (EAC), there has been little detailed research into how regional integration affects tourism management.

This study looked at the link between regional integration and tourism management from two angles. The first explored how regional integration shapes tourism management, focusing on issues such as the slow uptake of the single East African Tourist Visa, restrictions on tour vehicle access, and the broader challenges of integrating infrastructure, trade, and politics. The second considered the opportunities that exist within the EAC's regional framework to improve tourism management, aiming to find practical ways to make it more efficient while still advancing regional integration goals

The conclusion made about visa requirements and free movement is that the current EAC visa regime, such as visa on arrival and e-visas, pose significant barriers to travel due to various challenges and limitations. Visa on arrival, while offering a temporary solution for visa requirements, there is an implication that it may result in a negative experience for travelers in the event of application denial after investing time and resources to reach their intended destinations. This will lead to negative perceptions about the East African Community as a travel destination. Similarly, e-visas, while convenient, present challenges related to access to electronic devices, data coverage, platform reliability, and impromptu travel. Concerns about the impact of visa policies on tourism and the need for liberal visa regimes, particularly in the EAC merit attention.

Apart from visa requirements, the findings revealed that although EAC citizens do not require a visa to visit other partner countries, there is difference in requirements for border crossing. For example, citizens of Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, visiting each other's countries is simple. You only need your national identification card (ID), and a passport is not required. This ease of movement has helped boost tourism and trade, as it allows people to travel without the time and cost of obtaining a passport. For example, in Kenya, the cost of an East African e-passport ranges from about \$32 to \$85, and in Uganda and Rwanda, it is around \$65 to \$67. Travel statistics show the benefits of this arrangement. Kenyans make up the largest share of visitors to Uganda, while Ugandans are the top visitors to Rwanda, and Ugandans again lead as the largest group of visitors to Kenya. However, to visit Tanzania, even East African citizens still need a passport.

Therefore, while movement is freer than in the past, it is not as open as the Schengen area in Europe. Border posts still require travelers to show identification and, in some cases, health certificates. Crossing usually takes only a few minutes, but small inconveniences remain, such as filling out forms in Uganda or dealing with queues during peak travel times. The region has also

invested in one-stop border posts to make crossings faster, yet disputes and occasional closures, especially between Kenya and Tanzania, can still disrupt tourism. Even so, the ability to travel between Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda using just a national ID is a step toward greater East African integration and a more connected community.

In terms of the influence of infrastructure, the findings indicate that infrastructure integration within the East African Community (EAC) has a direct and significant influence on tourism management. While the region has made notable progress in improving road networks, particularly along the Northern and Central Corridors, and in implementing initiatives such as one-stop border posts and the COMESA Yellow Card scheme, air transport remains less harmonized. The absence of a unified EAC air transport policy, restrictive Bilateral Air Service Agreements, and varying national protectionist strategies have limited the potential of aviation to fully support regional tourism growth. This has left road transport as the dominant and most accessible mode for both domestic and cross-border tourism. Improving connectivity in the region will enhance destination accessibility, reduce travel time, and foster the growth of regional tourist circuits.

The findings on railway and inland waterways transport within the East African Community (EAC) demonstrates that infrastructure development in these sectors plays a significant role in shaping tourism patterns and opportunities in the region. The EAC's East African Railways Master Plan and treaty provisions on rail transport illustrate a coordinated approach to expanding rail connectivity, with particular emphasis on policy harmonization, shared facilities, and joint operational efficiencies. The experiences of Tanzania and Kenya highlight both the challenges and the potential of rail as a driver of tourism. While Tanzania's network has faced infrastructure deterioration, targeted rehabilitation has led to renewed passenger and cargo growth. In Kenya, the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) has improved travel efficiency between Nairobi and Mombasa, reducing travel time, lowering costs, and creating new tourism opportunities both along the coastal corridor and in secondary destinations. Wildlife viewing along the SGR route, coupled with enhanced safety and affordability, has made rail travel a distinctive and accessible option for domestic and international tourists, with positive spillover effects on local economies and supporting infrastructure.

Inland waterways transport, though less developed as a tourism asset, holds considerable untapped potential, particularly around Lake Victoria, which spans Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Historical maritime links played a central role in trade and mobility, but current services remain focused primarily on freight rather than passenger or tourism-oriented transport. Initiatives such as the launch of the M.V. Mpungu demonstrate the capacity for faster, safer, and more sustainable cross-lake movement, though tourism integration remains absent. Investment in port modernization, vessel safety, and navigation systems, alongside regional cooperation and private sector engagement, could transform Lake Victoria into a more vibrant tourism corridor.

Overall, the EAC's progress in railway and inland waterways integration reflects a broader commitment to regional connectivity. Rail improvements, particularly in Kenya, show a clear relationship between transport efficiency, tourism growth, and economic diversification. By extending similar strategic focus to lake transport and addressing policy, infrastructure, and service gaps, the EAC can strengthen its position as a multi-modal tourism destination. Enhancing these transport modes would not only improve visitor mobility but also generate broader socio-economic benefits for communities across the region.

The analysis of trade integration within the East African Community (EAC) revealed that the removal of barriers to labor and services plays a significant role in shaping tourism management across the region. The EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP) of 2010 was designed to create a unified economic space by enabling the free movement of people, goods, labor, services, and capital. In the context of tourism, these provisions have had a direct impact on workforce mobility and service provision across partner states.

The decision by Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda to abolish work permit requirements for EAC citizens has facilitated the mobility of tourism workers, encouraging cross-border employment and allowing the industry to benefit from a wider pool of skilled personnel. While concerns have been raised about potential job competition, wage pressures, and strain on public services, available evidence suggests that the policy has coincided with increases in tourism activity rather than negative economic displacement. However, the absence of a standardized regional framework for recognizing qualifications continues to hinder the full potential of labor integration. Without harmonized standards, inconsistencies in skill recognition may affect service quality and create regulatory uncertainty for employers.

Tanzania's continued requirement for EAC citizens to obtain work permits remains a notable barrier to labor mobility in tourism. While intended to safeguard local employment opportunities, such measures limit the flexibility of tourism businesses to draw on regional talent and contradict the EAC's commitment to a truly integrated common market. The associated administrative processes, including proof that no local worker can fill a position, present additional obstacles that may discourage skilled workers and investment in tourism-related services.

The free movement of services within the EAC has been more readily observed among the countries with open labor policies, enabling tourism professionals to operate across borders with minimal restrictions. However, in Tanzania, regulatory barriers have also affected the movement of tourism services, as seen in the long-standing restrictions on cross-border tourist van access to national parks. These policies, while rooted in earlier bilateral agreements, illustrate the tension between national regulatory priorities and regional integration commitments.

Overall, trade integration through the free movement of labor and services has clear potential to enhance tourism management in the EAC by improving workforce distribution, increasing service

diversity, and fostering a more competitive tourism environment. Realizing these benefits fully will require greater policy harmonization, mutual recognition of qualifications, and the easing of restrictive practices that limit cross-border service provision. A balanced approach that addresses national labor market concerns while advancing integration goals would strengthen the EAC's position as a unified tourism destination.

The analysis under the potential political integration of the East African Community (EAC) into a federation presents both opportunities and challenges for tourism management in the region. A political federation could foster stability, improve security, and promote a unified identity, all of which are conducive to a more attractive tourism environment. Shared governance structures and common foreign policies may enable the EAC to negotiate collectively for trade and tourism agreements, enhance transboundary resource management, and facilitate the free movement of people, labor, and services. Such developments could lead to greater workforce diversity, enriched cultural exchange, and more coordinated tourism initiatives, enhancing the region's global competitiveness.

However, this study concludes that historical tensions, uneven economic capacities, and differences in political priorities among partner states may limit the benefits of integration. Past disputes, such as those between Kenya and Tanzania, illustrate how deep-seated mistrust can persist despite formal unification, potentially undermining tourism cooperation. Similarly, the integration process itself could introduce governance complexities that strain relations and destabilize the tourism sector if not carefully managed. While the free movement of people and labor may redistribute tourism traffic and expand skills across the region, it may also lead to job market pressures, wage disparities, and social service strains. Unrestricted residence rights and cross-border property ownership could boost investment in tourism infrastructure but may also drive issues such as overtourism, inflated costs, and reduced housing affordability in popular destinations.

For political integration to benefit tourism management, it will be essential to balance economic growth with sustainable practices, harmonize regulatory frameworks, and address social equity concerns. This requires policy coordination that safeguards environmental assets, ensures fair labor market access, and promotes inclusive development. If managed with properly, a politically integrated EAC could position itself as a stable, culturally rich, and environmentally responsible destination. If approached without adequate safeguards, integration could instead amplify disparities and tensions, ultimately weakening the very tourism sector it seeks to strengthen.

## 6 CHAPTER 6: NEW SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS

1. A new scientific finding is that replacing consensus-based decision-making with the principles of variable geometry and variable speed could significantly improve the efficiency and adaptability of governance within the East African Community (EAC). Under the current consensus model, a single dissenting member can delay or block collective decisions, slowing regional progress. Adopting variable geometry would allow states ready to advance in specific integration initiatives to proceed without being constrained by others, while variable speed would recognize and accommodate different levels of preparedness among members. The European Union provides a practical precedent, where mechanisms such as “enhanced cooperation” have enabled willing states to deepen integration in areas like the Schengen Area and the Eurozone, without requiring full participation from all members. The implication of this finding is that the EAC could accelerate policy implementation, encourage innovation in integration strategies, and better manage political diversity, ultimately fostering a more resilient and adaptable regional framework that still accommodates slower-moving members without impeding overall progress.
2. The persistent challenges within the East African Community (EAC), including divergent visa regimes, inconsistent border procedures, delayed fund disbursements, and the non-implementation of agreed frameworks, are rooted in the Secretariat’s current intergovernmental design. Functioning solely in a coordinating and advisory capacity, the Secretariat lacks the legal authority to compel member state compliance. This study identifies that reconfiguring the EAC into a supranational body led by a commission vested with binding legislative and enforcement powers could address these systemic constraints. The European Union provides a relevant case in point, where the European Commission’s supranational authority has enabled the harmonization of visa policies, border controls, and funding mechanisms, leading to improved policy coherence and regional competitiveness. The scientific contribution of this finding lies in demonstrating that adopting a similar governance model could systematically align EAC member state actions with shared tourism objectives, thereby fostering a harmonized policy environment capable of elevating the competitiveness and integration of the region’s tourism sector.
3. That redefining the East African Community’s (EAC) principle of subsidiarity to incorporate direct participation of citizens and tourism stakeholders in the election of Members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) could significantly enhance democratic legitimacy and policy relevance within the region. Allowing citizens to elect their representatives would strengthen political accountability, while the inclusion of tourism sector stakeholders would ensure that legislative decisions are informed by sector-

specific expertise. Comparative experience from the European Union shows that the direct election of Members of the European Parliament has increased public engagement and strengthened the alignment of regional policies with constituent priorities. Similarly, stakeholder representation in decision-making bodies, as seen in regional tourism boards across the EU, has facilitated the development of targeted policies that promote sustainable tourism, support cross-border initiatives, and address sector-specific challenges. The implications of this finding are that such a redefinition could not only democratize EAC governance but also produce more responsive and technically informed tourism policies, enhancing the sector's contribution to regional integration and economic growth.

4. Targeted visa facilitation policies can serve as a boost for tourism growth and regional integration within the East African Community (EAC). Specifically, introducing visa-free entry for travelers in transit through EAC airports for the duration of their valid air ticket, alongside a third-party visa scheme for visitors from low-risk countries, could significantly reduce administrative barriers to movement. Empirical evidence from destinations such as Dubai, which allows visa-free or simplified entry for transit passengers, and China, which offers short-term visa exemptions for travelers from selected countries, demonstrates the effectiveness of such measures in increasing stopover tourism, extending visitor stays, and stimulating related sectors. Applying these models to the EAC would not only promote ease of travel but also strategically position the region as a competitive transit and tourism hub. The scientific contribution of this finding lies in policy interventions of visa regimes, and these can produce measurable impacts on mobility patterns, market accessibility, and tourism economic integration.
5. This study presents the finding that full implementation of the East African Community (EAC) Common Market Protocol, particularly the removal of work permit requirements, the standardization of professional qualifications, and the facilitation of skilled labor mobility, has the potential to create an integrated regional labor market. Such reforms would enable optimal allocation of human resources, foster cross-border professional collaboration, and stimulate socio-economic development across member states. Evidence from the European Union's Single Market illustrates the transformative impact of comparable measures, where mutual recognition of qualifications and the abolition of intra-union work permits have enhanced labor mobility, reduced skills mismatches, and supported regional economic growth. Adopting similar mobility enabling mechanisms within the EAC could yield measurable gains in productivity, employment opportunities, and regional integration outcomes for the tourism sector.
6. This study identifies that strategic adoption of code-sharing agreements can address aviation liberalization concerns within the East African Community (EAC) while

enhancing regional air transport competitiveness. Code sharing enables airlines to extend their network coverage and access new markets without the financial burden of operating additional routes, thereby improving market presence and operational efficiency. Evidence from Europe, particularly through partnerships and collaborations between Air France and KLM with regional carriers like Kenya Airways, demonstrates how code-sharing arrangements have expanded connectivity, optimized resource use, and maintained competitiveness in liberalized aviation markets. Such models also improve passenger experience by offering more convenient connections, integrated ticketing, and coordinated schedules, which in turn strengthens customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. The scientific contribution of this finding lies in demonstrating that code-sharing can serve as a transitional mechanism for regions like the EAC, balancing the benefits of market openness with the operational and financial sustainability of local carriers.

## 7 CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY

The findings of this study suggest the transformation of the EAC from an intergovernmental to a supranational governance structure is not merely an administrative or political aspiration; it is a strategic necessity for overcoming institutional constraints that continue to undermine the tourism sector's potential. The tourism industry, by its very nature, relies on seamless mobility, coordinated policy frameworks, and integrated marketing strategies that can be most effectively delivered through a governance model with binding authority over member states. While the proposal may appear ambitious, it is firmly anchored in the EAC's own integration roadmap, which identifies political federation as the final pillar of integration. Drawing on lessons from the European Union (EU), where supranational institutions have successfully addressed cross-border policy challenges, this study positions governance reform as a cornerstone for future tourism growth in the region.

The current intergovernmental nature of the EAC limits the Secretariat to an advisory and coordinative role without the authority to enforce compliance with agreed regulations and directives. As a result, policy harmonization across member states has been inconsistent, implementation timelines are often delayed, and tourism-related agreements are frequently undermined by national priorities. These gaps have real and measurable consequences for tourism management. For example, differences in visa regimes, inconsistent border procedures, and fragmented marketing efforts weaken the region's competitiveness compared to unified tourism blocs such as the EU's Schengen area.

A supranational EAC would fundamentally alter this dynamic. By reorganizing the Secretariat into a Commission with powers that could, in specific instances, supersede national laws, the enforcement of tourism-related agreements would shift from voluntary to mandatory. Sanctions for non-compliance would serve as a deterrent to policy backsliding, ensuring that collective decisions are implemented uniformly across the region. This would not only improve the predictability of the policy environment but also foster greater investor confidence in the regional tourism market.

The financial sustainability of the EAC is another structural challenge with direct implications for tourism. At present, the Community faces chronic delays in member state contributions, with several countries in arrears by millions of dollars. This funding gap has left the EAC dependent on development partners like Germany, Norway and Denmark, whose priorities often differ from those of the region itself. For tourism, this dependency can mean that donor-driven projects take precedence over initiatives that align more closely with the region's integrated marketing strategies or infrastructure needs.

A supranational structure would allow for binding financial contribution mechanisms, like the EU model, where member states are obligated to meet budget commitments or face suspension from decision-making processes. This approach would provide a predictable revenue stream to fund

tourism infrastructure, cross-border conservation projects, joint marketing campaigns, and policy research. The long-term effect would be the ability to plan and execute multi-year tourism strategies without the uncertainty caused by budgetary shortfalls.

Legal enforcement within the EAC also suffers from limitations inherent in its intergovernmental design. The East African Court of Justice (EACJ), while empowered to adjudicate disputes, lacks an independent enforcement mechanism and relies entirely on the goodwill of member states. This has led to instances of open defiance, as in the Attorney General of Kenya v. Independent Medical Legal Unit case, where a ruling against the Kenyan government was ignored.

In tourism, the absence of enforceable legal rulings can undermine initiatives such as cross-border wildlife corridor protections, visa liberalization agreements, or regional environmental regulations that underpin ecotourism. A supranational judicial authority comparable to the Court of Justice of the European Union would ensure that rulings are binding and enforceable across all member states, thereby safeguarding the regulatory framework upon which integrated tourism development depends.

Beyond governance structures, the study finds that the principle of subsidiarity within the EAC requires redefinition to foster direct citizen and stakeholder participation in decision-making. Currently, members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) are nominated by national political parties rather than directly elected by citizens. This indirect system has contributed to a disconnect between regional policymaking and the interests of ordinary citizens, as well as a lack of specialized representation from key sectors such as tourism.

Comparatively, the European Parliament's system of direct elections has increased public engagement, strengthened accountability, and ensured that sectoral interests including tourism are represented in legislative processes. For the EAC, adopting a similar system could allow tourism professionals, business leaders, and conservation experts to influence legislation in ways that support sustainable growth and cross-border collaboration. This change would help ensure that tourism policy is not merely a by-product of broader political agendas but a strategic focus.

The implications of transitioning to a supranational structure for tourism are far-reaching. In the short term, harmonized regulations would streamline visa policies, border controls, and investment protocols, making the region more attractive to international travelers and investors. In the medium term, the predictable governance environment could support the development of large-scale tourism infrastructure, such as regional transport corridors, integrated booking platforms, and coordinated destination branding.

In the longer term, a supranational EAC could position itself as a unified tourism bloc capable of competing with established global destinations. By pooling resources, the region could develop niche tourism markets such as pan-East African cultural heritage routes, regional ecotourism

packages, and cross-border adventure tourism circuits that no single country could offer alone. Furthermore, enhanced legal and financial stability would enable long-term conservation efforts critical to the sustainability of wildlife-based tourism, a major economic driver for the region.

Globally, there is a clear trend toward regional blocs designed for supranational governance to improve competitiveness in sectors that benefit from scale and coordination, including tourism. The EU's Schengen visa, ASEAN's ongoing tourism integration efforts, and the Gulf Cooperation Council's unified tourism marketing initiatives all demonstrate the advantages of coordinated policy frameworks. For the EAC, moving toward a supranational model would align it with these global trends and position it to capitalize on emerging opportunities in inter-regional tourism partnerships, digital tourism platforms, and sustainable travel initiatives.

Overall, the transformation of the EAC from an intergovernmental to a supranational organization has the potential to resolve persistent institutional weaknesses that limit tourism sector growth. By strengthening enforcement mechanisms, securing sustainable funding, enhancing judicial authority, and expanding democratic participation, the EAC can create an integrated tourism market capable of delivering significant economic, social, and cultural benefits. The path forward is challenging, but the evidence suggests that governance reform is not just desirable it is essential for realizing the full promise of tourism as a driver of regional integration and development in East Africa.

## 8 APPENDICES

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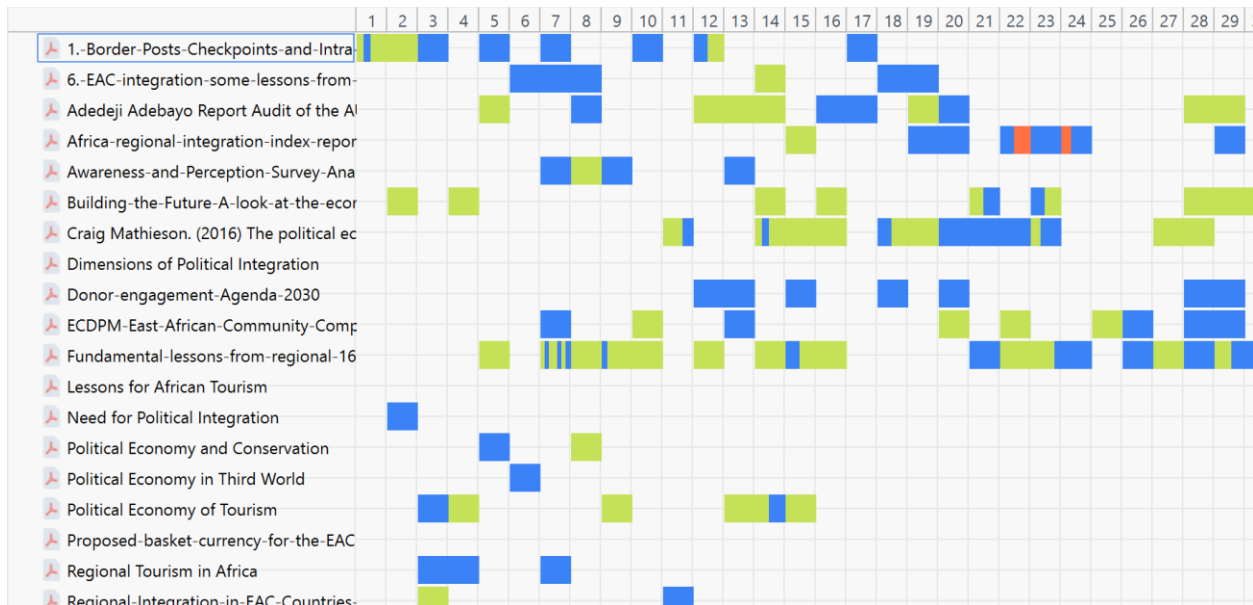
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## 8.2 Key Observations made from the Observation Checklist

Queues and Wait times	Description
Length of queues	Varied depending on arrival of travelers. Longer when public buses arrived. Guests from tour vans take shorter time than those from buses
Average wait times in queues	Three to Five minutes depending on the direction the traveler (exit or entry). Longer when entering Uganda because of filling in printed papers and travelers have no pens.
Separate lanes for different categories	No categories just different counters. Separated only when done with one country
Availability of fast-track option	None
Any unusual incidents	Presence of strangers offering forex exchange without official receipts. Rates depends on your negotiating power. Higher number of tour vans at Namanga border than all the other borders. Busia appeared to be the busiest of all those observed. Some passengers took longer than usual causing delays in the queues.

## 8.3 Similarity Analysis of Documents



#### 8.4 Summary of the anonymized characteristics of the participants

<b>Lens</b>	<b>Label</b>	<b>Country</b>
Policy Makers at Regional level (PMR)	PMRKEN PMRRWD PMRUGD PMRTNZ1	Kenya (KEN) Rwanda (RWD) Uganda (UGD) Tanzania (TNZ)
Policy Makers at National level (PMN)	PMNKEN PMNRWD PMNUGD PMNTNZ	Kenya (KEN) Rwanda (RWD) Uganda (UGD) Tanzania (TNZ)
Policy Consumers as Tour Operators (PCTO) (Numbers 1 and 2 for Kenya were assigned based on sequence of interviews)	PCTOKEN1 & PCTOKEN2 PCTORWD PCTOUGD PCTOTNZ	Kenya (KEN) Rwanda (RWD) Uganda (UGD) Tanzania (TNZ)
Policy Consumers as Tourists (PCT)	PCTKEN1, PCTKEN2, PCTKEN3, PCTKEN4, PCTKEN5 PCTRWD1, PCTRWD2, PCTRWD3 PCTUGD1, PCTUGD2, PCTUGD3, PCTUGD4, PCTUGD5 PCTTNZ1, PCTTNZ2, PCTTNZ3, PCTTNZ4	Kenya (KEN) Rwanda (RWD) Uganda (UGD) Tanzania (TNZ)

Source: Researcher (2024).