



## **Policy Brief: The Role of the East African Business and Investment Advisory Council (EABIAC) in Supporting Women and Youth in Trade and Investment**

### **Table of contents**

<b>Policy Brief: The Role of the East African Business and Investment Advisory Council (EABIAC) in Supporting Women and Youth in Trade and Investment</b> .....	1
Table of contents.....	1
Executive Summary.....	1
1. Current Context .....	2
1.1 Economic Significance .....	2
1.2 EABIAC's Mandate.....	2
2. Role of EABIAC in Supporting Women and Youth .....	2
2.1 Policy Recommendations .....	2
2.2 Capacity Building and Support.....	2
2.3 Access to Finance .....	3
2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation .....	3
3. Strategic Recommendations .....	3
3.1 Develop Targeted Policies .....	3
3.2 Enhance Support Programs .....	3
3.3 Foster Public-Private Partnerships .....	3
3.4 Promote Inclusivity in Regional Initiatives .....	4
4. Conclusion .....	4
-EABIAC Contact Information-.....	4

### **Executive Summary**

The East African Business and Investment Advisory Council (EABIAC) plays a crucial role in shaping trade and investment policies within the East African Community (EAC). This brief outlines the strategic role of EABIAC in enhancing the participation of women and



youth in trade and investment, providing recommendations for inclusive policies and initiatives that promote equitable economic growth and development in the region.

## 1. Current Context

### 1.1 Economic Significance

- **Women and Youth Contributions:** Women and youth represent a significant portion of the population and the workforce in East Africa. Their participation in trade and investment is essential for harnessing the full economic potential of the region.
- **Barriers to Participation:** Despite their potential, women and youth face barriers such as limited access to capital, inadequate training, and restrictive regulatory environments that hinder their involvement in trade and investment.

### 1.2 EABIAC's Mandate

- **Advisory Role:** EABIAC provides strategic advice on trade and investment policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing economic integration and development within the EAC.
- **Focus Areas:** The Council addresses key issues affecting business and investment climate, including gender and youth inclusion in economic activities.

## 2. Role of EABIAC in Supporting Women and Youth

### 2.1 Policy Recommendations

- **Inclusive Trade Policies:** Develop and advocate for trade policies that specifically address the needs of women and youth, including measures to enhance access to markets and reduce regulatory barriers.
- **Investment Incentives:** Propose targeted investment incentives for businesses led by or employing women and youth, including tax breaks, grants, and subsidized loans.

### 2.2 Capacity Building and Support

- **Training and Education:** Support the development and implementation of training programs and educational initiatives aimed at enhancing the skills of women and youth in trade and investment sectors.
- **Mentorship and Networking:** Facilitate mentorship programs and networking opportunities to connect women and youth entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders and potential investors.

## 2.3 Access to Finance

- **Financial Inclusion:** Advocate for financial inclusion policies that improve access to capital for women and youth entrepreneurs, including microfinance options and venture capital funding.
- **Support Structures:** Establish support structures such as business incubators and accelerators specifically designed to assist women and youth in scaling their ventures.

## 2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Impact Assessment:** Implement mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of women and youth in trade and investment.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Create channels for receiving feedback from women and youth stakeholders to continuously refine and improve policies and programs.

## 3. Strategic Recommendations

### 3.1 Develop Targeted Policies

- **Gender and Youth Focus:** Design and implement trade and investment policies with specific focus on overcoming barriers faced by women and youth, ensuring their equitable participation in economic activities.
- **Policy Integration:** Integrate gender and youth considerations into broader trade and investment policies and strategies at the regional level.

### 3.2 Enhance Support Programs

- **Capacity Building Initiatives:** Invest in capacity-building initiatives that provide women and youth with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to thrive in trade and investment.
- **Access to Resources:** Increase access to financial resources, training, and mentorship programs tailored to the needs of women and youth.

### 3.3 Foster Public-Private Partnerships

- **Collaborative Efforts:** Encourage public-private partnerships to create and support programs aimed at empowering women and youth in trade and investment.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage with various stakeholders, including governments, private sector players, and civil society organizations, to promote inclusive economic policies and practices.

### 3.4 Promote Inclusivity in Regional Initiatives

- **Inclusive Trade Agreements:** Advocate for regional trade agreements and initiatives that incorporate provisions for enhancing the participation of women and youth.
- **Regional Networks:** Develop regional networks and platforms that facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among women and youth entrepreneurs across the EAC.

### 4. Conclusion

The East African Business and Investment Advisory Council (EABIAC) has a pivotal role in promoting the participation of women and youth in trade and investment within the EAC. By providing strategic guidance, advocating for inclusive policies, and supporting capacity-building initiatives, EABIAC can help unlock the economic potential of these critical groups, driving sustainable and equitable economic growth in the region.

**-END OF POLICY BRIEF-**

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