

HESSEN



Invest.EastAfrica!

German-East African Business Forum Report

27 – 29 January 2026

Frankfurt/Main and Berlin (Germany)

IHK
Industrie- und Handelskammer
Gießen-Friedberg
Die Unternehmer-Mitmachorganisation

Der Mittelstand.
BVMW e.V.
Bundesverband

Partners in Transformation
Agentur für Wirtschaft
und Entwicklung

WUS
World University Service

IHK
Industrie- und Handelskammer
Frankfurt am Main

IHK Berlin

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Background

The East African Community (EAC) and its eight partner states – Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda – are the fastest-growing region in Africa. This **economic powerhouse of 320 million people** is stretching from the Indian to the Atlantic Oceans and aiming to deepen economic partnership with the European Union. To further economic cooperation and investments, the Government of the German State of Hessen has identified the EAC as a partner region and facilitated initial engagement with the pharma industry during the 2024 German-African Business Summit in Nairobi (Kenya).

Following up, the State of Hessen and the East African Community invited **60 business representatives from East Africa** in the key sectors (1) Digital Economy & Artificial Intelligence, (2) Tourism & Logistics, (3) Health & Pharmaceuticals, (4) Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Credits and (5) Agribusiness & Trade from all eight EAC partner states and Germany to the “Invest.EastAfrica! – German-East African Business Forum” in Frankfurt/Main and Berlin, where they met over **350 representatives of German businesses** with the following objectives:

- Facilitate business-to-business exchange to incubate joint investments;
- Announce and politically scale new European–East African business cooperations involving German companies;
- Expand economic cooperation with the East African market of over 330 million people, including through instruments such as the planned EU–EAC Economic Partnership Agreement;
- Highlight the potential of the new nexus between foreign trade promotion and development cooperation in one of Africa’s key growth markets.

The delegation of East Africa was led by Hon. Andrea Aguer Ariik, Deputy Secretary General of the **East African Community**, as well as Jaswinder Bedi, Vice-President of the **East African Business Council (EABC)**. Their efforts were supported by all projects of **German Development Cooperation (GIZ)** with EAC. The German counterparts were invited by Hessen Minister for **Federal and European Affairs, International Relations, and Bureaucracy Reduction**; the Chambers of Commerce and Industry – **IHK Frankfurt, IHK Gießen-Friedberg, and IHK Berlin**; **Afrika-Verein**; **BVWM**; and the **World University Service (WUS)** and German companies such as **Lufthansa**.





During these three days, **five new business partnerships** were launched by leading European companies, such as **Bayer, Melitta, Hispasat, and Ofi**, with their East African partners. Worth five million Euro they aim to accelerate sustainable trade, stronger value chains and inclusive growth – from digital business models and artificial intelligence to coffee and cashew processing, entrepreneurship, and internet connectivity. The forum next year will see the launch of **10 new business cooperations**. These projects are expected to target an estimated **500 million Euro in investment volume** and involve German companies such as **Bayer AG, Commerzbank, ODDO Bank, Lufthansa and Fresenius** alongside their East African partners such as **Cassava Technologies, Bedi Investment, Hormuud, AKROS, NegusMed and Equatorial Nuts**.

1. Preparation

Building on the joint cooperation during the German-African Business Summit in Nairobi in 2024 and the existing "Memorandum of Understanding" of the East African Business Council (EABC) and Afrika-Verein (AV), an official invitation was launched by the Hessen Minister for Federal and European Affairs, International Relations, and Bureaucracy Reduction in November 2025. Additionally, all partners formed a permanent steering committee to harness collaboration and joint preparation. Based on the official invitation, the EABC launched an open call to its national member business associations as well as sectoral networks to identify companies in the selected priority sectors with these criteria:

- Active involvement in cross-border trade within the EAC region
- ·Existing or potential for cooperation with German or EU partners
- ·Tangible business case for partnership within the next 12 months

Out of the initial 200 interested companies, EABC selected 60 business representatives for the exchange to Germany. In Germany, AV, in close cooperation with the Hessen Government and IHK Frankfurt, IHK Gießen-Friedberg and IHK Berlin, the Afrika-Verein, BVWM, World University Service and German companies such as Lufthansa, invited for the business forum and received 350 applications from businesses and their associations for the events during the three days.



The cooperation was also supported by active public relations efforts, such as the **initial press release** of AV and the **second one closing the forum** with its impacts. Additionally, the Hessen Minister and GIZ board member published an **opinion piece** in the **VRM media group newspapers** on the economic potential of East Africa and the necessity of German businesses to invest in the region, reaching over 700,000 readers.

2. Implementation

Two weeks before the event, the AV and EABC held **one-hour sector calls, inviting all registered participants** for the priority sectors (1) Digital Economy & Artificial Intelligence, (2) Tourism & Logistics, (3) Health & Pharmaceuticals, (4) Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Credits and (5) Agribusiness & Trade to introduce participants and its business and investment interest. GIZ facilitated the calls and introduced them into the main priority areas of regional economic cooperation, including its sectors, opportunities, and challenges. The majority of all participants arrived already on Monday, 26th January 2026, in Frankfurt/Main and gathered for an **informal networking dinner**.

The first conference day, **27th January 2026**, started with **170 participants** and the **official opening** of the forum at the Frankfurt School of Finance by Fatma Dirkes (Vice President & Head of Executive & Professional Education, Frankfurt School of Finance & Management), Dr Johannes Loheide (Head of Department of Foreign Trade, SMEs, Vocational Training, Technological Innovation, Hessen Ministry of Economic Affairs), Andrea Ariik Malueth (Deputy Secretary General, East African Community, EAC) and Bernd Lakemeier (GIZ Director of Economic and Social Development, Digitalisation). Afterwards, Roland Koch (Former Minister-President of the State of Hesse) and Réne Koinzack (Head of Eastern and Southern Africa, Lufthansa Group) hold keynote speeches, followed by an in-depth **presentation by EAC Secretariat** on the EAC Common Market and Custom Union, as well as investment opportunities.

In the afternoon, Business2Business dialogues were facilitated by AV and German Development Cooperation (GIZ) in the priority sectors, and initial discussions and agreements were summarised during the evening reception by René Brosius (Deputy Director-General, Hessen Minister for Federal and European Affairs, International Relations, and Bureaucracy Reduction).



The second conference day, **28th January 2026**, was dedicated for high-level visits to German companies in Hessen for all priority areas, where business representatives from East Africa visited the sides to further B2B investment opportunities with over 50 German representatives:

- **Digital Economy & Artificial Intelligence:** Visits to SAP, DE-CIX and DFKI
- **Tourism & Logistics:** Visits to M&M Militzer & Munch air Sea Cargo
- **Health & Pharmaceuticals:** Visits to Merck KGAA and Siemens Switchgear
- **Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Credits:** Visits to ODDO BHF Bank and Commerzbank
- **Agribusiness & Trade:** Visits to M&M Militzer, Hassia Packaging Machinery GmbH, IMA Dairy and Food Holding GmbH and Ortlieb Organic GmbH

During the evening the IHK Frankfurt/Main invited all participants as well as the EU-Bhutan Business Forum delegates for joint reception "**Hesse connects: Opportunities in Africa and Asia**" with over 200 participants to the "Deutsche Börse", where Klaus-Stefan Ruoff, Vice-President of the Frankfurt am Main Chamber of Industry and Commerce as well as Karin Müller, State Secretary for Federal and European Affairs, International Affairs and De-bureaucratisation of the State of Hesse opened – followed by guest addresses of H.E. Mr. Dasho Tshering Tobgay, Prime Minister of Bhutan, as well as Andrea Ariik Malueth, Deputy Secretary General, East African Community (EAC), Thorsten Schäfer-Gümbel, Chair of Management Board GIZ as well as Nicola Beer, Vice President, European Investment Bank (EIB). Additionally, the representatives from Spanish communications satellite operator HISPASAT and the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) launched their strategic cooperation.

The third conference day, **29th January 2026**, started with a bus transfer of all participants to Berlin for the **high-level evening reception "Unlocking Opportunities: Impact & Partnerships"** at the GIZ Representation in Berlin. The event with 150 participants aimed to expand economic cooperation with the East African market of over 330 million people, announce and politically scale new European–East African business cooperations involving German companies and highlight the potential of the new nexus between foreign trade promotion and development cooperation in one of Africa's key growth markets.

Further to their high-level dialogue on the geopolitical importance of economic cooperation between East Africa and Germany/Europe, Philipp Knill, BMZ Director for East Africa on behalf of Dr Bärbel Kofler (Parliamentary State Secretary, BMZ); Hon. Andrea Aguer Ariik (Deputy Secretary General, EAC); Jaswinder Bedi (Vice Chairman, EABC); and Dr Volker Treier (Member of the Executive Board, DIHK) launched four new business cooperations:



- Partnership for sustainable coffee-value chain with Melitta
- EAC AI Alliance with Bayer AG and Cassava Technologies
- Cashew Partnership with ofi and East African processors such as Equatorial Nuts
- E-Commerce Partnership between BEVH and Kenya/Uganda E-Commerce associations.

The high-level evening reception concluded with the launch of the EAC tourism brand "Visit East Africa – Feel the Vibe" by the EAC Deputy Secretary General, followed by networking and East African music entertainment.



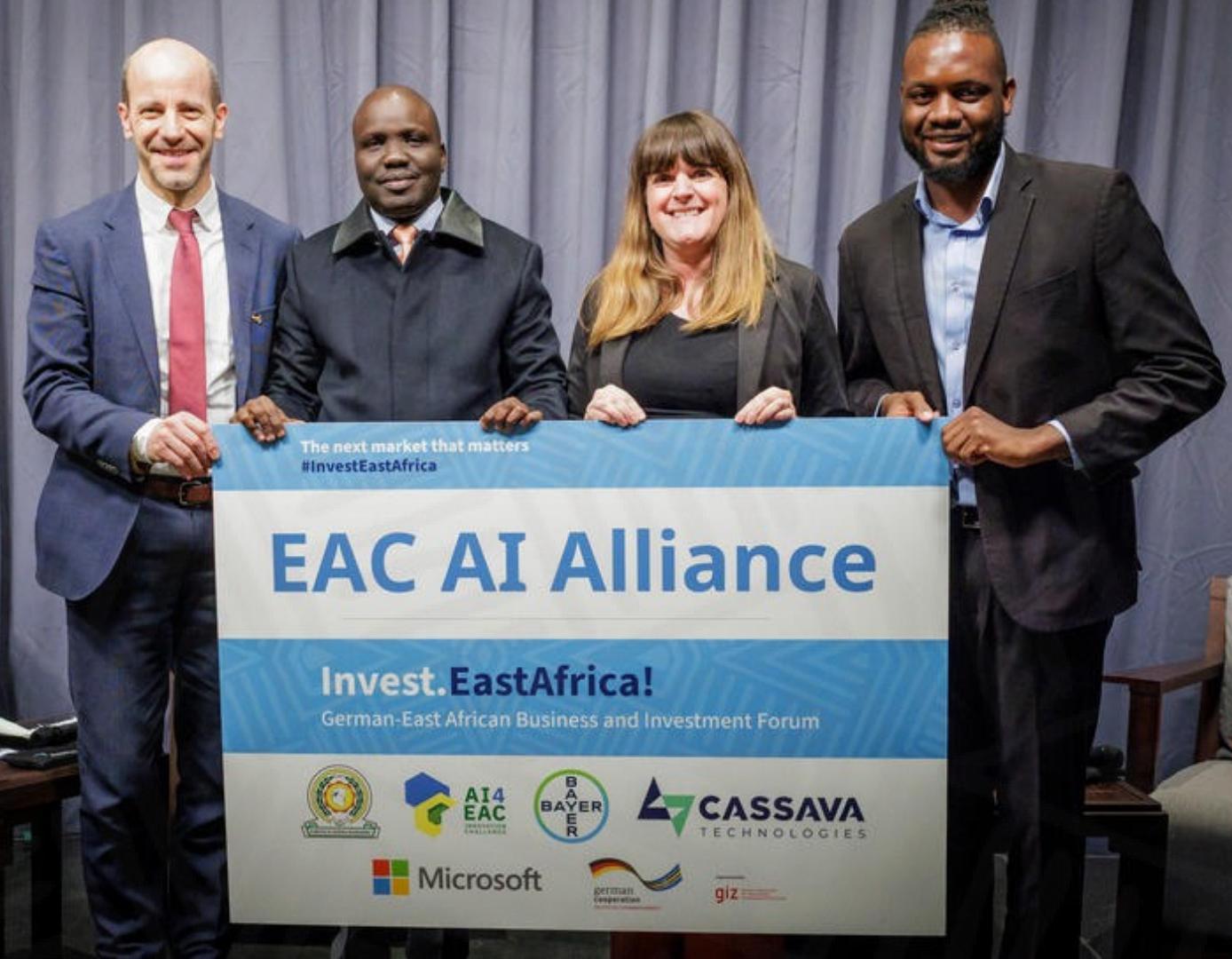
3. Launched Projects

During the "Invest.EastAfrica! - German-East African Business Forum" the following five concrete business cooperations between Germany/Europe and East Africa were launched worth five million Euro to accelerate sustainable trade, stronger value chains and inclusive growth:

- **Agribusiness & Trade: Partnership for sustainable coffee-value chain with Melitta:** The developPPP partnership between Melitta, GIZ, and Plan International demonstrates how corporate sourcing interests, new European regulations, and development cooperation can be strategically aligned. Through joint investments coffee cooperatives in Tanzania and the EAC region are integrated into sustainable and traceable supply chains that meet European market requirements, including deforestation-free sourcing. The partnership strengthens local value creation, ensures long-term market access, and serves as a scalable model for sustainable agricultural imports from East Africa.
- **Digital Economy & Artificial Intelligence: EAC AI Alliance with Bayer AG and Cassava Technologies:** The EAC AI Alliance brings together private sector, and international partners to accelerate regional economic integration. The objective is to systematically build regional AI capacities across all eight EAC Partner States—from practice-oriented training and applied AI research to innovation-driven entrepreneurship. Bayer and Cassava are interested in AI in East Africa to drive innovation and improve their business outcomes in sectors such as healthcare and agriculture.
- **Agribusiness & Trade: Cashew Partnership with ofi and East African processors such as Equatorial Nuts:** The cashew partnership with Olam Food Ingredients (ofi) represents a long-term approach to strengthening regional value creation and sustainable supply chains. Based on a strategic MoU, companies and development cooperation partners work together to establish fair trade relations, traceability, and climate-resilient production. The partnership connects East African producers such as Equatorial Nuts to European sustainability requirements and demonstrates how global agribusinesses can act as anchor investors for regional industrialisation.

- **Digital Economy & Artificial Intelligence: E-Commerce Partnership between BEVH and Kenya/Uganda E-Commerce associations:** The strategic partnership on E-Commerce of the German E-Commerce and Mail Order Association (BEVH) aims to build a structured knowledge and cooperation network between German and East African business associations. The focus lies on digital business models, market intelligence, and concrete B2B matchmaking. Through joint webinars, delegation visits, and market studies, digital trade flows between East Africa and Europe are systematically developed.
- **Digital Economy & Artificial Intelligence: Strategic Partnership between HISPASAT and IGAD:** The strategic partnership between the Spanish communications satellite operator HISPASAT and the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) aims to jointly implement the "Scaling Up African Connectivity" project to provide internet connectivity for rural areas in East Africa. Both sides aim to attract further funding from Development Finance Institutions to increase use of E-Learning and tele-medicine improving livelihood and economic growth in the target areas.







4. Incubated Projects and Follow-Up

During the **preparatory sector calls**, **Business2Business roundtable** as well as **companies visits** in Hessen, the following ten further projects were developed to be further incubated and officially launched during next year's forum. These projects are expected to target an estimated 500 million Euro in investment volume:

- **Tourism & Logistics:** Cashew cooperation between Lufthansa Group and Akros/Equatorial Nuts to use East African products on Lufthansa and its partner airlines flights in East Africa.
- **Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Credits:** Pipeline development of carbon projects for ODDO BHF with Ugandan carbon developers and Stanbic Bank. Additionally, ODDO BHF investment agreed in principle for the Kilimanjaro Project and is exploring co-financing of Green Climate Fund coastal program.
- **Agribusiness & Trade:** Cooperation between Bedi Investment and SAP on traceability of the textile value chain to German marketplaces, such as OTTO
- **Agribusiness & Trade:** Cooperation between Ofi and Akros/Equatorial Nuts on market-access for delivery of nuts from East Africa to European market
- **Agribusiness & Trade:** Cooperation between ETG/EFF and East African Cashew Processors and Farmers on the supply of Organic Certified Cashew Nuts.
- **Digital Economy & Artificial Intelligence:** Cassava Technologies on digital AI infrastructure will refine concrete investment opportunities, engage partners such as ASML and Ericsson, and explore financing options with Commerzbank.
- **Digital Economy & Artificial Intelligence:** Hormuud Telecom will engage with DE-CIX to explore cooperation on data centre development, as well as with East African payment providers and German stakeholders to enhance market access to the European digital market and support investments in payment infrastructure.
- **Health & Pharmaceuticals:** Cooperation and joint investment of Commerzbank and Fresenius Africa on medical equipment delivery for East Africa



- **Health & Pharmaceuticals:** Cooperation and joint investment of Technologie Transfer Marburg e.V., Marti Connecting Africa and NegusMed Ltd. to offer subscription-based equipment and diagnostic logistics to hospitals and healthcare centres, with an initial pilot in Kenya and subsequently Tanzania.
- **Health & Pharmaceuticals:** Cooperation between Epimune GmbH and BioLinx Africa with a focus on innovation and product development related to molecular diagnostics, including go-to-market research.

Throughout the next twelve months all projects of GIZ with East African Community will support their East African counterparts during project-incubation (utilising the instruments for private sector engagement of German Development Cooperation, such as develoPPP, but also Global Gateway funding schemes) of the above-mentioned projects. During the next "Invest.EastAfrica! - German-East African Business Forum", scheduled for early 2027, these projects shall be launched.

Watch the highlight video of the forum [here](#).

Annex: Companies Official EABC Business Delegation

Company	Sector	Country
AKROS Limited	Agriculture & Trade	TZ
Equatorial Nut Processors Ltd	Agriculture & Trade	KE
BioLinx Africa	Health & Pharmaceuticals	KE
NegusMed Ltd	Health & Pharmaceuticals	KE
KPN Teleradiology Ltd	Health & Pharmaceuticals	KE
CiCi World company from South Sudan	Agriculture & Trade	RSS
Cassava Technologies	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	40 African Countries
Hormuud Telecom	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	SO
RAAS Agribusiness Solutions	Agriculture & Trade	SO
TIPC Biomass	Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Markets	BU
Tabaarak ICT Solutions	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	SO
SALAAM SOMALI BANK	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	SO
SoM Habag company Ltd	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	SO
Msika Group	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	Africa/Ireland
TAHAFresh Handling Ltd	Agriculture & Trade	TZ
Dynamic Consult Ltd	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	RSS

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Kijani Pamoja	Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Markets	TZ
Teki Goteki International Limited	Digital Markets & Artificial Intelligence	KE/UG
Equity Group Foundation	Digital Markets & Artificial Intelligence	KE
Bayer AG	Health & Pharmaceuticals Agriculture & Trade	EA/Europe
Precise Enterprise Ltd / bsg group of companies	Agriculture & Trade	RSS/UG
Philips Pharma	Health & Pharmaceuticals	RSS
KILIFAIR Promotion Co. Ltd.	Tourism & Logistics	TZ
Sense of Africa	Tourism & Logistics	KE
Kibo Guides/ TWC	Tourism & Logistics	TZ
African Queens Adventure Ltd	Tourism & Logistics	TZ
Tembo Steel Corporate	Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Markets	UG
Carbon Tanzania	Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Markets	TZ
Premier Bank	Digital Markets & Artificial Intelligence	SO
Bosch/ Robert Bosch East Africa Ltd.	Health & Pharmaceuticals	KE/DE
PREDESTINE FARM LIMITED COMPANY	Agriculture & Trade	UG



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EcoClean Environmental Services & Consulting	Agriculture & Trade	RSS
RAAS Agribusiness Solutions	Agriculture & Trade	SO
Msika Group	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	Ireland/EA
Metumi Tea Gardens Limited	Agriculture & Trade	KE
Biosyntec	Agriculture & Trade	UG
Winning Generation Uganda Limited	Health & Pharmaceuticals Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Markets	UG
GAUGE ENERGY (MAK Tanzania Ltd)	Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Markets	TZ
Microsoft East Africa	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	EA
African Horizons Ltd	Tourism	UG
Bedi Investment	Trade, Manufacturing and Invetsment	KE
ottobock	Health & Pharmaceuticals	KE/DE
Groundbreaker	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	UG
KTN Advocates	Digital Markets & Artifical Intelligence	UG
Ambessa Capital	Agriculture & Trade	EA/DE
Kilimanjaro Project	Critical Raw Materials & Carbon Markets	TZ

The next market that matters

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