# Regional Trade Facilitation roadmap 2026-2031

*Connecting Economies, Boorsting Intra-Regional Trade, Enhancing Competitiveness*

*Nairobi, 29th HoAI Ministerial Meeting*

*Septemeber 2026*

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SITUATION ANALYSIS

# The trade facilitation challenge in the Horn of Africa

**The region's strategic location, growing population, productive potential and gateway to global markets make the Horn of Africa a key hub for trade. Yet, it remains one of the least integrated regions. Fragmented markets, high transaction costs, regulatory divergence and limited capacity to invest in connectivity constrain effective economic integration.**

| Security & Fragility | Unreported NTBs | Regulatory Divergences | Transit Governance Gaps | Digital Systems Silos |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overlapping political and security crises force border closures, convoy escorts, and elevated insurance premiums. | Complex licensing and paper checks persist; low complaint logging in digital reporting platforms. | Scattered rules, language barriers, lacking information portals, and unharmonized vehicle axle-load standards. | Inconsistent transit regimes along corridors, connecting coastal gateways to landlocked markets, with limited mutual recognition of customs guarantees and insufficient interoperable cargo tracking. | Border agencies operate isolated IT systems without cross-border integration or interoperability, forcing traders to resubmit data manually. |

**Monitoring & Oversight:** Regional Trade Facilitation **Committee** -> **Report** to Ministers of Trade

# ENHANCING CROSS-BORDER TRADE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: REGIONAL INTEGRATION GOALS

**Top 5 priorities**

1. STRUCTURED REGIONAL DIALOGUE
2. FACILITATE SMALL-SCALE CROSS-BORBER TRADE & SUPPORT WOMEN TRADERS
3. REGIONAL PORTAL FOR CROSS-BORDER PROCEDURES
4. JOINT TIME RELEASE STUDIES & ACTION PLANS
5. MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF ROAD TRANSPORT PERMITS
6. INTEROPERABLE ELECTRONIC CARGO TRACKING
7. MONITOR CORRIDOR CONDITION & PERFORMANCE (RRCMIS)
8. REGIONAL BORDER MANAGEMENT FORUMS & JOINT COMMITTEES
9. CROSS-BORDER DATA SHARING & INTEROPERABILITY
10. DEDICATED FAST-TRACK LANES FOR AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATORS (AEO+)
11. INTEROPERABLE DIGITAL PAYMENTS FOR DUTIES & FEES
12. SUPPORT DESSU CORRIDOR AUTHORITY & TRANSPORT OBSERVATORY
13. IMPLEMENT AICFTA PROTOCOLS (COORDINATED ALIGNMENT & CAPACITY BUILDING)
14. OPTIMIZE PRE-ARRIVAL PROCESSING (PAP)

HoA Regional Trade Corridors

# Implementation Architecture

## From goals to activities

**Translating regional strategic objectives into structured, practical interventions**

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### Structured Roadmap Steps

For every strategic goal, the roadmap defines a sequenced set of implementation activities designed to translate the strategic objective into concrete action.

### Sequenced Implementation Pathways

Activities are organised in an operational sequence, with earlier actions providing the basis for subsequent reforms, investments or implementation steps.

### Tailored Implementation Responses

Depending on the nature of the gap being addressed, activities may involve policy or regulatory reforms, diagnostic studies, institutional arrangements, capacity-building, digital solutions, process improvements, development of common procedures and standards, or mechanisms for inter-agency and cross-border coordination.

**Monitoring & Oversight:** Regional Trade Facilitation Committee -> Report to Ministers of Trade


Leverage
Strategic
High
EFFORT
Low
6.d
10.b
10.a
12.a
6.b
8.d
6.c
5.b
5.a
2.d
6.e
14.b
12.b
11.d
9.c
9.c
11.c
9.d
11.b
7.c
3.c
7.b
10.c
11.a
6.a
13.d
13.b
8.a
2.c
13.c
7.a
8.b
4.c
2.b
1.e
3.a
1.d
4.a
13.a
1.c
3.b
8.e
1.b
2.a
4.b
1.a
9.a
Quick wins
Short
Medium
Long (up to 5 years)
TIME TO EXECUTE

# Implementation Matrix (days 1–45)

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| STEPS & TIMELINE | OBJECTIVE & OWNERSHIP | KEY ACTION ITEMS | CORE DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **STEP 1**<br>(Days 1–15)<br>**Immediate Focus** | **Nominate Representatives**<br>**Who:** Ministers of Trade | • Send formal Secretariat notification (Djibouti, Somalia South Sudan) | • Formal designation completed<br>• National delegates directory circulated by the HoAI Secretariat |
| **STEP 2**<br>(Days 16–30)<br>**Governance** | **Convene Inaugural Meeting & Adopt ToRs**<br>**Who:** RTFC Members | • Formally endorse ToRs/Rules of Procedure | • Fully constituted RTFC<br>• TORs adopted<br>• Chairperson elected<br>• Working Groups architecture established |
| **STEP 3**<br>(Days 31–45)<br>**Sustainability** | **Mobilise Support & Experts**<br>**Who: Development Partners/HoAI countries** | • Launch ToRs for recruitment of expert/experts<br>• Mobilize expert personnel for technical support to the RTFC | • Experts assisting the RTFC in its work |



# Thanks for your attention

*Danilo Desiderio*

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