

Digitalisation for East African Trade and Integration (DIGEAT)

Simplifying the cross-border access to labour markets in the EAC Partner States for professionals

The challenge

The EAC Common Market, the second pillar of East African integration, came into force in 2010 after its adoption by Partner States. However, the lack of a common standardised approach to evaluate work qualifications between Partner States is a limitation for professionals in the region to offer their services regionally. As a result, free movement across borders is hindered. Professionals accredited in their home country must go through the same process in the destination country due to the lack of data exchange mechanism of national professional registries among EAC Partner States. In 2011, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania signed Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) to address the abovementioned issue. These MRAs cover four groups of professionals: accountants, architects, engineers and veterinarians. But until today, even though these MRAs were signed, other challenges arising from diverse national legal frameworks lead to continued discrimination of the specified professionals.

Our approach

As an innovative step to breaking down barriers hindering the cross-border mobility of professionals in East Africa, the East African Community (EAC) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) jointly developed the project Digitalisation for East African Trade and Integration (DIGEAT).

In a pilot phase, DIGEAT focuses on the existing MRA for engineers to establish a digital data exchange mechanism which will later serve as the best practice for other professions. The project will cover the four Partner States that have signed the MRAs, while others will be consulted for future buy-in.

DIGEAT's approach consists of two steps aiming to improve the framework conditions for the mobility of engineers to offer their services in the EAC.

One step focuses on improving digital services to strengthen the cross-border mobility of engineers. This involves implementing process analysis in the Partner States and documentation of the results. Moreover, it describes solutions to increase the effectiveness of process execution. In this regard, DIGEAT also focuses on the technical optimisation of national registers and the implementation of workshops on data exchange mechanisms and their legal frameworks and adaptations.

The developed draft of the regulatory framework will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for their political endorsement. The genesis of the framework builds on two pillars: The establishment of a multistakeholder forum, which involves representatives of key parties, e.g. engineering associations, immigration authorities, and private and public sector representatives.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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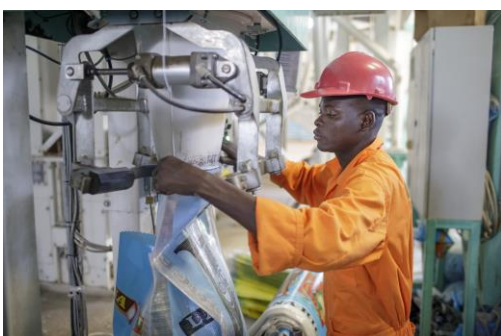


Photo (L) to (R): Engineers at a construction site



Photo (L): Digitalisation, Photo (R): Cross-border movement

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The second step eyes on the level of individual capacity. DIGEAT introduces and develops a guideline for cross-border data exchange among the professional group of engineers. Furthermore, the guide will contain detailed instructions and training content on regional data exchange, data governance, data protection, process and tools, together with training of experts from authorities and professional groups.

Projected Outcomes ...

- A digital mechanism for regional data exchange will be established.
- Engineers from four participating EAC Partner States will rate their access to improved digital tools that facilitate cross-border access to the labour market.
- Regulatory framework improvements will be submitted to the EAC to facilitate the cross-border mobility of engineers.
- National engineering registers will be technologically and structurally harmonised.
- Sub-processes in at least three Partner States for the approval of cross-border work for engineers in EAC Partner States will be modified.

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Text

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