



## 2023 Gender Equality Competition Award Entry

### The East African Community (EAC) – GIZ Cluster

#### Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusion – Creating Impacts for East Africans

Submission made by the Composite EAC Cluster Gender Focal Points:

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#### 1. Overview of Gender Equality in the East African Community (EAC-GIZ) Cluster

The GIZ Cluster at the East African Community (EAC-GIZ) supports the EAC Secretariat and its Partner States, in ten different sectors including digitalisation, agriculture and food security, education and training, gender, community development and civil society mobilisation and environment and natural resources. The cluster has a strong commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through its technical cooperation framework with the partners, as essential for sustainable development while employing a gender-transformative approach backed by the feminist foreign development core principles in fostering gender equality across its diverse programmes. The Cluster's gender-based initiatives is anchored on the EAC Treaty, the EAC Gender Policy, the GIZ Gender Strategy, and the Foreign Feminist Policy of the Federal Foreign Office.

Gender equality is promoted across the various sector programmes, including digitalisation, education, science and technology, natural resource and water management in Lake Victoria Basin, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Pan-African e-commerce (PeCI), deepening the socio-economic integration in tourism and ICT sectors, and border governance and management. Guided by the BMZ Gender Equality Markers one (GE1), all Cluster programs have module and output indicators on gender, backed by project-specific gender analysis reports. On the other hand, EAC-GIZ Cluster focuses on gender-lens programming in implementation at the partner level with the interaction between assigned cluster gender focal points. As a result, achievements continue to be registered in the implementation following pre-defined indicators at programme levels, having realised an increased awareness of gender inclusivity, women participation, engagement and empowerment through education, digital skills trainings, business growth, trade, and policy dialogues.

The EAC-GIZ Cluster has in place several tools and mechanisms to ensure gender-transformative approaches are embedded across programmes for realistic results and impact, such structures for Gender Focal Points per Project, Gender dialogue platform dubbed as the *EAC-Cluster Gender Baraza*, Cluster Gender Steering Structures, Quarterly and Annual assessment tools to inform the development of the yearly Cluster gender strategy and action plans.

#### 2. The Challenge for Gender Equality work in the EAC-GIZ Cluster

Although the EAC Treaty and Gender policy provide for the promotion of gender equality in the region, the large percentage of EAC population, i.e., women and girls, are still marginalised in the decision-making processes and have limited access to education, finance, economic opportunities, information, and communication technologies in comparison to their male counterparts.

In the socio-economic sector of the EAC, according to UNCTAD 2021, economic activity has shifted over time away from agriculture towards services in the EAC Partner States, and services have become the main sector of the region's economies. However, the sectoral shift of labour was particularly weak for women with 96 percent of women in Burundi, 76 percent in Kenya, 84 percent in Rwanda, 71 percent in Tanzania, and 77 percent in Uganda are still employed in agriculture. Yet women's employment in services mainly increased in low-skilled services such as trade and tourism, while men accessed more positions in higher-skilled services such as transport and communication.

In addition, women in the EAC region continue to face systemic and persistent challenges in informal and formal cross-border trade such as limited market knowledge, low access to capital and credit, limited access to information, limiting cultural practices, attitudes and beliefs and low levels of education. Therefore, for both



women and youth, these challenges require expertise in trade governance, enacted continental legal and policy arrangements as well as concerted efforts,

Furthermore, in the digital economy sector, digitalization is gaining momentum and yet the digital gender divide is still visible. The EAC Partner States ranking in the Affordability Drivers Index (ADI) on bridging the gender digital divide is relatively high compared to other African countries. For example, Rwanda is ranked 6th, with 51.48 ADI, Kenya is ranked 10th with 48.82 ADI, Uganda is ranked 12th with 47.93 ADI and Tanzania is ranked 17th with 43.73 ADI. The gender disparities in the digital revolution across East Africa are primarily due to policy implementation failure, gender inequality associated with power relations, politics, and socioeconomic and cultural norms.

Finally, in the e-commerce sector, the growth and impact vary greatly between men and women-owned companies, with significance of inequalities in income, connectivity, capabilities and governance. The common barriers for women entrepreneurs to access e-commerce platforms include internet connectivity, the cost of broadband, poor legal framework on e-commerce, inadequate digital training, traditional preference for cash and access to finance remains a main challenge for business growth. These challenges offer EAC-GIZ Cluster with the opportunities to design strategic approaches to programming and policy interventions in collaboration with key stakeholders in the socio-economic sectors which contributes to the promotion of gender equality as a quality feature of work and implementation of the feminist core principles.

### **3. The EAC-GIZ Cluster Approach to the Promotion of Gender Equality Internally and with Partners**

The promotion of gender equality in the EAC-GIZ Cluster is essential for achieving inclusive and equitable growth for the region and makes a strong economic sense to invest in gender equality as it has contributed to a multitude of positive effects on the region's economic development, particularly in enhancing the development and implementation of the regional policy framework, increasing women entrepreneurs and innovation, boosting cross-border, bridging the gender digital divide, and increasing youth participation in regional and continental trade. The EAC-GIZ Cluster Gender Award entry provides some selected approaches used by the Cluster for integrating gender equality as a core feminist principle and a quality feature within the EAC-GIZ Cluster Programs and these tried and tested approaches were designed and implemented in cooperation and partnership with the EAC Secretariat and its Organs and Institutions, private sector and civil society organizations. These approaches include; (1) A digital mobile-based trade information and accountability platform for supporting women entrepreneurs doing cross-border trade in East Africa, (2) Enhancing value addition to the Moringa sector for women entrepreneurs, (3) Training and capacity development of women and youth on regional and continental trade, (4) Female targeted Scholarship, and digital skills and business resilience capacity building for women and Project development for sustainable integrated water resource management in the EAC and (5) Development of gender safeguards and checklist and project proposal to support mainstreaming gender on the Lake Victoria Basin Commission.

### **4. The EAC Cluster Approach, Results and Impacts on Gender, Women and Youth in East Africa**

A deep Dive into the EAC-GIZ Cluster Sectoral Approach, Interventions and results to the promotion of gender equality as per the Entry Criteria are elaborated below:

- **The Promotion of Gender Equality with the EAC-GIZ Cluster:**

The EAC-GIZ Cluster programs' partnerships with the private sector and civil society organisation's approach to supporting the implementation of project ideas from private sectors promoting regional and continental integration helped women entrepreneurs access the opportunities and resources needed for their successful cross-border trade. Through the Incubator for Integration and Development in East Africa (IIDEA) and Intra-regional Trade Facilities (IRTF) initiatives, discriminatory practices and structures at border and partner institutional levels eliminated gender inequalities and facilitated women and youth participation in cross-border and policy decision-making. For example, the mobile-based trade information and accountability platform for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) cross-border traders in EAC, implemented by Sauti Kenya, and the value addition in Moringa by the East African Women in Business Platform (EAWiBP) project initiatives transformed women's participation in cross-border trade with ripple effects all over the region and beyond. More than 2,800 traders, 60% of them women, made 18,000 requests between 2018 to 2020 for trade and market information at



the EAC and continental levels through the Sauti platform accessible in 5 EAC Partner States. The value addition in the Moringa project benefited a total of 1,026 cross-border traders (153 are youths, 871 are women).

Additionally, the EAC Cluster dSkills@EA Project implemented with the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), has supported young professionals to acquire scholarships to study the master's program in Embedded and Mobile Systems offered at the Nelson Mandela African Institution for Science and Technology, in Tanzania. Out of 114 beneficiaries of the program's first 4 cohorts, about 36% are women empowered to make an impact in the field of ICT. A gender-lens programming has enabled the participation of women with a percentage indicator of female quota applied across capacity building programs and a criterion in the selection of students that takes into consideration the need for achieving a ratio of at least 30% women, with the aim to reaching parity. Women are given priority in the selection for beneficiaries when they are on a comparable level with any male candidate. The dSkills@EA has strengthened the innovation and entrepreneurship capacities of 95 youth in the EAC Partner States, 28.9% of whom are women, have developed market-oriented digital businesses. More women have received digital skills trainings for upskilling, increased productivity, and employability. dSkills@EA program interventions focus on bridging the digital gender gap and establishing an inclusive approach in skills development and innovation transfer, with emphasis on the need for economic empowerment of women in academia through digitalization. For example, emphasis on increase of women in teaching of master's program, from 1 woman out of 6 who are male teachers in 2020, now increased to 3 women currently teaching the EMoS programme. Strategic efforts have been deployed in reaching women in all Partner States through targeted external communication measures (story telling based on impact of project to female beneficiaries).

The EAC -GIZ Cluster African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) through the capacity development at border points in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania initiative has promoted gender equality by ensuring that women's economic empowerment is at the forefront of these initiatives. In collaboration with the local women's organizations and feminist groups as well as youth organizations, the intervention has led to enhanced levels of awareness about the AfCFTA, its benefits and how to take advantage of it, enhanced business export readiness through export readiness training and increased understanding of African markets and how to carry out market intelligence using tools such as ITC Export Potential Map for women and youth in the region and continent.

Through the EAC/LVBC IWRM Project the Cluster has supported EAC and LVBC to put in place a simple, flexible Safeguard and Gender checklist that incorporates the requirements of Partner States, LVBC, EAC and various Development Partners. The Safeguard and Gender checklist will further be used by technical staff when identifying and designing IWRM projects.

- **Gender as a Quality Feature of our Work in the EAC-GIZ Cluster:**

In the EAC-GIZ Cluster, gender equality dimensions are considered in several aspects of the results framework backed by the respective programs' gender analysis. Indicators at both levels (module and output level) are gender-responsive to contribute to gender equality in training and entrepreneurship in the EAC. The cluster programs apply a gender lens programming by monitoring through interventions the participation of women using a participation registration and nomination of participants at national levels for a regional meeting. The cluster has employed a dedicated gender focal point advisor with adequate experience and knowledge that coordinates gender, diversity, and inclusion topics within and with the partners. At the same time, the various cluster programs have designated technical advisors handling gender issues who participate in the cluster gender activities and are regarded as the Cluster Gender focal points. The EAC-GIZ gender focal points actively contribute to the planning and coordination of gender interventions and activities at the cluster level, and with project partners, supported by the Tanzania Country Portfolio Team and the Africa Department. The cluster gender focal points structure consists of gender dialogue sessions, regularly monthly exchanges on thematic topics of gender equality increasing the awareness and need for gender-sensitive programming such as, gender and human rights, gender in integrated water resource management, harassment and gender-based Violence, gender in pandemic preparedness etc.

The Cluster gender baraza successfully provides a regular platform for dialogue and exchange internally and with partner involvement, hence creating an open culture in the EAC Cluster for discussion and participatory address of stereotypes is upheld, which encourages an open and gender-sensitive team mindset. Policy recommendations from the Cluster gender dialogue sessions are submitted to cluster management for action and to the relevant partners for consideration and alignment in implementation of their policy decision-making



Implemented by:



process. For instance, the fast-tracking of the assent process of the East African Gender and Development Bill 2018 and to promote digitalization of the cross-border procedures to effectively facilitate trade and accommodate more women in cross-border trade and curtail the harassment of cross-border traders.

Furthermore, the EAC-GIZ cluster is in the process of institutionalising the promotion of gender equality and foreign feminist development policy and its currently assessing both at the country and Cluster levels its gender, diversity, and inclusion operating environment to inform the development of the cluster gender strategy to support these processes and embed them in a targeted approach to the needs of the cluster/project team. It is anticipated that these strategy and action plan will be ready in 2024 to support the Cluster integrated approach to gender mainstreaming and promotion of the foreign feminist development policy as a quality feature of the cluster work.

- **Integration of the Feminist Core Principles in the EAC-GIZ Cluster:**

The feminist core principles that guide the inclusion of feminist development policies within the EAC-GIZ programmes. The various programmes have embraced diversity and inclusivity by ensuring that the voices of women and youth, for example in the private sector, SMEs and cross-border entrepreneurs as well as disadvantaged groups are heard and represented by emphasizing recommendations that are submitted to the EAC policy decision making processes. The EAC-GIZ cluster programmes have over time redefined negative patriarchal and socio-cultural gender norms, addressing the structural root causes of gender-based inequalities as testified by our partners and beneficiaries. In addition, the Cluster recognises that gender equality is not solely a women's issue but a societal one therefore, engaging with men and boys and their respective institutional structures as allies in the effort for promoting positive masculinities and breaking down harmful stereotypes. The Cluster incorporates intersectionality, acknowledging that its key stakeholders especially the marginalised groups and beneficiaries face multiple forms of discrimination and oppression based on factors such as race, ethnicity, class, disability, and sexual orientation, hence it ensures that its interventions and approach are responsive to diverse experiences. The EAC-GIZ cluster's efforts align with the feminist core principles of intersectionality, inclusivity, empowerment, diversity, non-violence, accountability, and sustainability.

- **EAC-GIZ Cooperation and Partnerships in the Promotion of Gender Equality:**

The EAC-GIZ-Cluster recognises the importance of partnerships and cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society, women and youth organisations, and communities, while actively engaging with local, national, and regional actors to leverage collective efforts in promoting gender equality in all sectors. The emphasis of gender equality and consensus is integrated at programme implementation level with partner engagement during joint work planning and steering of the project such the EAC Secretariat, East African Business Council, the East African Civil Society Organisations, East African Women in Business Platform etc. The EAC-GIZ Cluster has integrated gender-sensitive indicators and has conducted gender analyses to inform interventions with our partners. Collaborative efforts with these organisations are essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive gender outcomes. For example, assignment of gender focal points at partner institutions and high consideration of recruitment of women in leadership and technical advisory is seen.

## 5. Conclusion

The EAC-GIZ Cluster is strongly committed to promoting gender equality as a quality feature of its work in collaboration with partners. The Cluster embraces a rights-based approach to social inclusion and programming by recognising gender equality as a fundamental human right and prioritises cooperation and partnerships to drive positive transformation and gender responsive change. The adoption of feminist core principles in the cluster work at regional levels underscores the EAC cluster's strength, uniqueness and determination to contribute at regional and continental levels tackling gender norms and structures to create more equitable and inclusive regional policies, strategies, projects and various interventions in the East African Community. Through collective efforts of the Cluster programs in seven sectors and sub-sectors, the Cluster is more than responsive and inclusive in addressing a multitude of socio-economic gender issues in these sectors necessary for the sustainable economic development of the region. By institutionalizing the cluster approach to gender equality, the Cluster will not only pool technical and financial resources for the promotion of gender equality but also contribute to fostering an inclusive regional and continental trade. The selected feature of the cluster's success and impact stories on gender equality work based on this entry can be accessed through this [link](#).