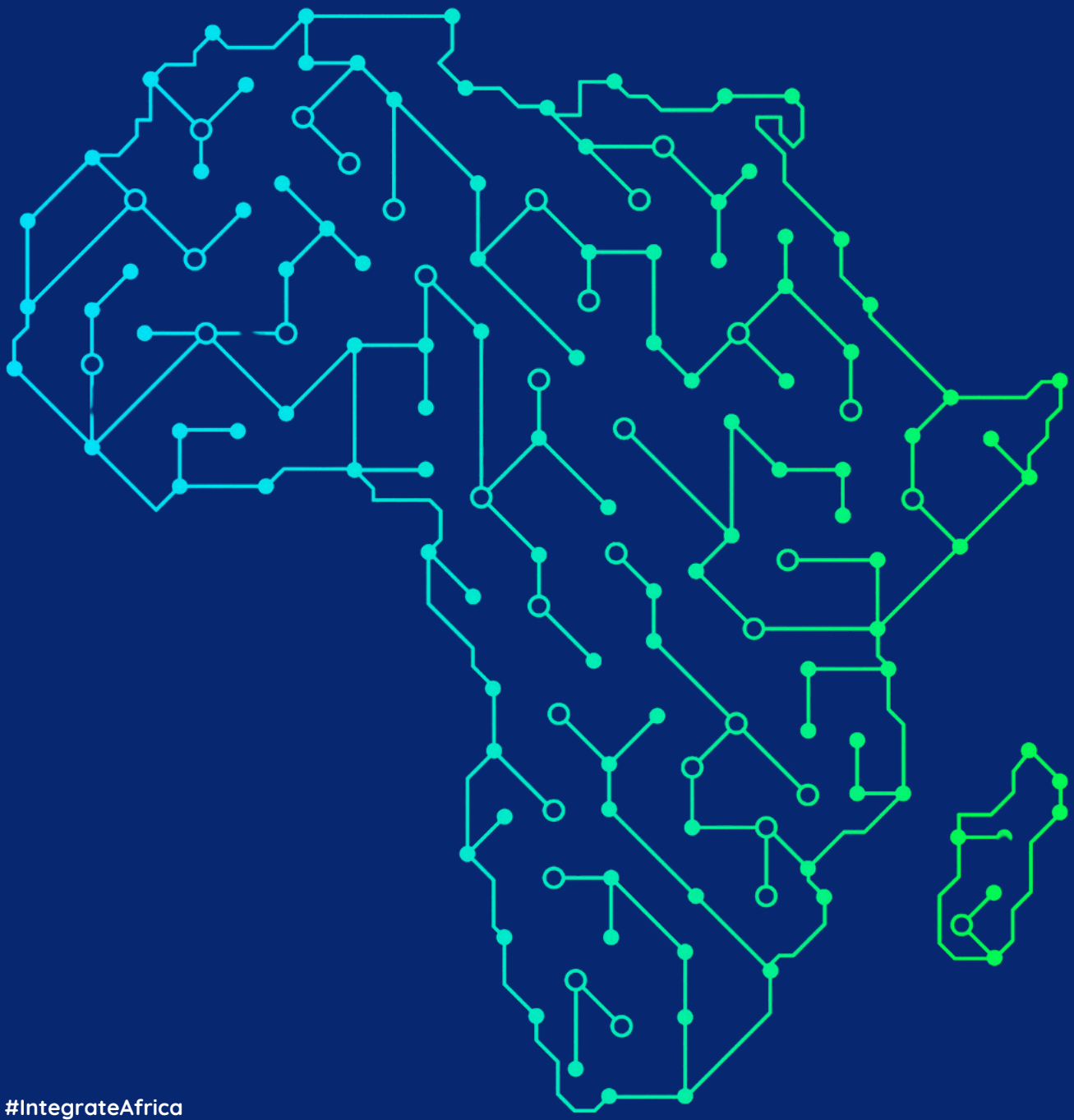
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP
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1964-2024
Ans / Years

An AfDB Newsletter on Regional Integration in Africa

THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION BRIEF

Issue 1



#IntegrateAfrica



Leaders at the unveiling of the AfDB's Ten-Year Strategy (TYS 2024-2033) during the AfDB Annual Meetings in Nairobi, Kenya.

THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION BRIEF

Issue 1

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Front Cover Illustration: Mariika/Freepik

#IntegrateAfrica



AfDB President Dr Akinwumi Adesina - a resolute champion of #IntegrateAfrica

Welcome

Welcome to our first edition of The Regional Integration Brief - a newsletter from the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group Regional Integration Coordination Office (RDRI). Anchored on priority pillars: Scaling up infrastructure connectivity; Promoting cross-border trade and investment; and Deepening Africa's financial integration, the AfDB's Integrate Africa vision is bold, clear, and forward-looking - an essential cornerstone for unlocking Africa's immense potential. The year 2024 saw AfDB celebrate its 60th anniversary and the launch of its new Ten-Year Strategy (TYS 2024-2033). And as the curtain drew on 2024, the importance of regional integration in the next decade is even more imperative. Come with us on the journey into this next chapter as The Regional Integration Brief shines a spotlight on how this bold vision will continue to be implemented. We kickstart our inaugural issue with RDRI 2024 highlights, and invite you to join us as we look back at 2024 – through the eyes of RDRI service lines.

Enjoy the read!

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REGIONAL INTEGRATION IS AT THE CORE OF AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY...



2024 has been a crucial year for the African Development Bank Group. With official adoption by the Board of Directors and launch of the new AfDB Ten Year Strategy (TYS 2024 – 2033), we have fresh impetus to move forward in our goal to accelerate Africa's structural economic transformation and prosperity through making affordable financing available to our Regional Member Countries to invest in the accelerators of development.

Regional integration is at the core of Africa's development strategy – and the AfDB is proud to be the foremost investor in the continent's efforts to lay the pillars for regional development.

In this inaugural issue of the Regional Integration Brief: A Newsletter on Regional Integration for Africa, we look at the key milestones that have defined the AfDB's efforts, through the eyes of the Regional Integration Coordination Office (RDRI).

I congratulate the team on this worthy initiative and encourage them to face 2025 with even more courage, drive and grit, to make the AfDB's Integrate Africa aspirations a reality.

MRS. NNENNA NWABUFO
Vice-President for Regional Development, Integration, and Business Delivery

> WE ARE STITCHING TOGETHER, THE TAPESTRY OF THE AFDB'S ECOSYSTEM – STRIVING TO ENSURE THAT IN ALL WE DO, THE INTEGRATION LENS IS AT THE CORE.



It is a singular honor to lead the team at the African Development Bank Group's Regional Integration Coordination Office (RDRI). Our brief is clear – to mobilize all of the AfDB's assets and capabilities to manifest its goal to Integrate Africa. This is not simply an ideal, it is quintessential to Africa's survival and to its ability to create conditions for its people to thrive.

With the AfDB's new Ten-Year Strategy (TYS 2024 -2033), concretizing the centrality of regional integration, we in RDRI, have fastened our belts and stepped into high gear. We are working to build the groundswell of Africans – public institutions, business and ordinary citizens – who can drive the continent's integration.

At the core of our efforts are the following pillars: operationalizing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); building productive capacities including through regional value chains; designing and financing the regional infrastructure that will integrate the continent and advance its industrialization ambitions; and ensuring that Africans can move visa free across the continent.

In this cause, we are stitching together the tapestry of the AfDB's ecosystem – striving to ensure that in all we do – the integration lens is at the core.

This inaugural issue of the Regional Integration Brief – a Newsletter from the Regional Integration Coordination Office - offers a glimpse into our strides in 2024.

I hope you enjoy the read as much as we have appreciated building the footprint.

DR. JOY KATEGEKWA
Director for Regional Integration Coordination Office (RDRI)

Meet AfDB's Directors General for Regional Integration

LAMIN BARROW

DIRECTOR GENERAL, WEST AFRICA



A Gambian national, Lamin's expertise spans policy analysis, strategic management, project finance, regional integration, and public-private partnerships. Before this role he served as Director General in Nigeria, where he managed the AfDB's $4.5 billion portfolio and spearheaded the rollout of flagship initiatives. Notably, the launch of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones and the Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE) program.



LEÏLA MOKADEM

DIRECTOR GENERAL, SOUTHERN AFRICA

Leila, a Tunisian national, is a seasoned professional in International Finance. With over 25 years of experience with multilateral development banks and international institutions, she drives high-level dialogue and AfDB operations, ensuring the Bank operates efficiently, effectively and successfully in the relevant countries, within the Southern Africa region.
Leila first joined the AfDB in September 2002 and has since held a number of positions including as the AfDB's Resident Representative in Egypt from 2014 to 2017 and Regional Resident Representative from February 2010 to December 2013, based in Dakar, Senegal.

SERGE N'GUESSAN

DIRECTOR GENERAL, CENTRAL AFRICA

Serge, a Canadian national, is a highly-skilled professional and has over 30 years of experience in international development and portfolio management. He has held important representation roles within the AfDB for almost 10 years. As Director General, he drives and ensures the operational efficiency, effectiveness and overall health of the AfDB portfolio across the Central Africa Region. He also spearheads regional business development and investment, driving resource mobilization across the countries under his remit.



DR. ABDUL B. KAMARA

DIRECTOR GENERAL, NIGERIA OFFICE



Abdul is a development economist with over two decades of experience in development policy research and financing for Africa's economic transformation and development. He joined the AfDB in 2004 and has served as Senior Agricultural Economist (2004–2007); as Manager of the Research Division (2007–2010), and as Resident Representative for Sudan (2011–2017) where he was also responsible for South Sudan until 2013. Prior to this role, he was AfDB Country Manager for the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.



DR. KENNEDY K. MBEKEANI

DIRECTOR GENERAL, EAST AFRICA

A seasoned development economist from Malawi, Kennedy has over 20 years of senior level country and regional experience in development finance, project management, policy advisory services and knowledge generation. He joined the Bank in 2009 as Chief Trade and Regional Integration Officer, providing leadership in formulating the Bank's trade assistance strategy to Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and on policy research, international trade, economic integration and development.

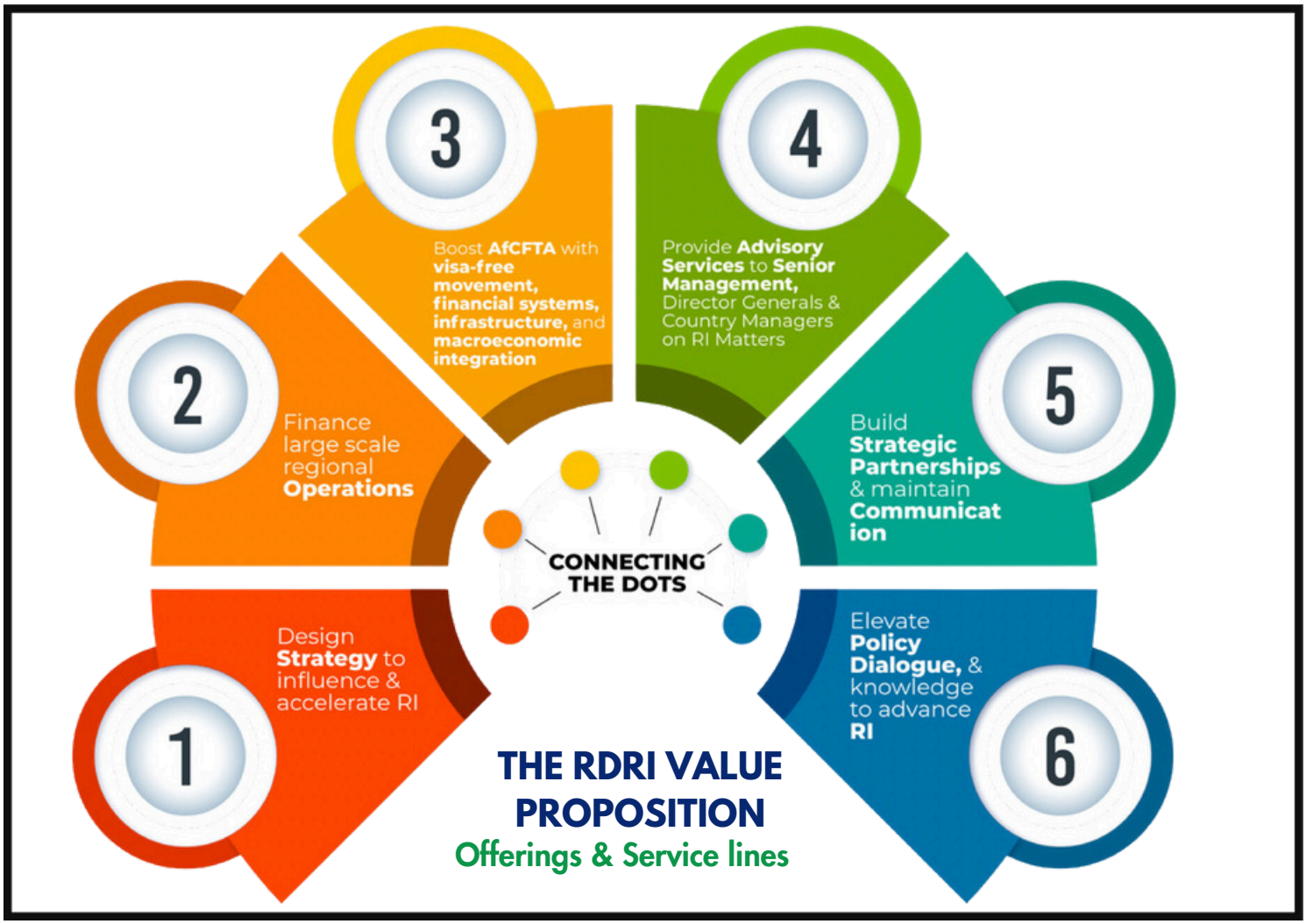
MOHAMED EL AZIZI

DIRECTOR GENERAL, NORTH AFRICA

With more than 26 years of experience, including at senior managerial level leading high performing teams in national, regional and international organizations, Mohamed is a well-respected development expert, who also has broad experience in successfully developing infrastructure projects in Africa. A Moroccan citizen, he has an impressive record of donor coordination and partnership development. While working as Director of the Water and Sanitation Department, and the African Water Facility (AWF) at AfDB, Mohamed managed a portfolio of 105 operations in 38 African countries worth about US $3.4 billion.



A Year in Review
2024 Highlights



In 2024, the Regional Integration Coordination Office (RDRI) continued to lead strategic orientation of the AfDB's approach on regional integration.

With the approval, of the AfDB's new Ten Year Strategy (TYS 2024 – 2033) in May 2024, RDRI seized the opportunity, and just a month later, developed a TYS Execution Playbook for its aspirations on integration.

This Action Plan allowed us the clarity of direction of travel, focused on six strategic priorities: Broadening engagement; Building trusted partnerships; Building internal capacity; Demonstrating value; Expanding knowledge offerings; and Accelerating transformative regional projects.

These priorities serve to advance the RDRI value proposition and its service lines which include: Strategy Development; Financing Large-Scale Transformative Regional Operations; Boosting AfCFTA Utilization; Advisory Services to Senior Management; Building Partnerships; and Elevating Policy Dialogue and Knowledge to Advance Regional Integration.

Our ambition is to expedite the AfDB's Integrate Africa Strategy by identifying and facilitating implementation and utilization of large scale regional projects that positively drive AfDB's and Africa's growth agenda, doubling intra-Africa trade and creating long-term prosperity for all.

A Year in Review: 2024 Highlights

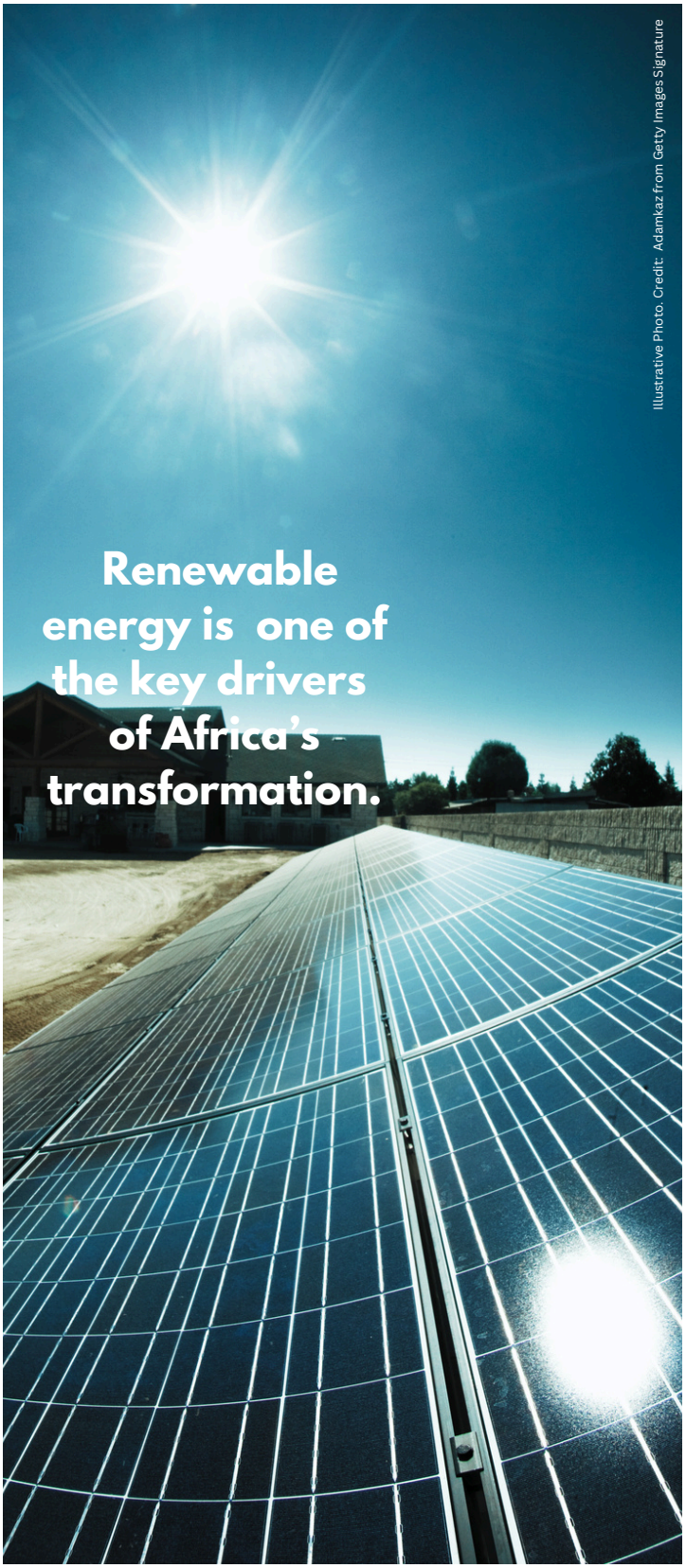
Some of our significant highlights in 2024 included support to the AfCFTA Secretariat, in a period that saw the operationalizing of this transformative Agreement, with more countries flagging off exports to AfCFTA markets under the Guided Trade Initiative.

RDRI also continued its established track record of effective oversight on Regional Operations under the African Development Fund (ADF-16) – successfully managing the Regional Operations Envelope (ROE) - achieving a record utilization rate of 74% by year end with bigger and better transformative operations in inter alia, transport, renewable energy, water and agriculture - laying ground for stronger capabilities on the drivers of Africa's transformation.

Supporting Regional Economic Communities

The year also saw RDRI give strong support to Africa's regional institutions – the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) – in a range of capacity development areas. For example:

- Financial integration in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which culminated in the adoption of its Regional Development Fund's operational phase in December 2024;
- Expansion of the East African Community–supported regional Payments and Settlement System (EAPSS) facilitating a cost–effective way for cross-border trade by transacting in local currency.
- In both West and Central Africa, and following intense engagement with the RECs, RDRI offered technical leadership in the review of the region's development strategies.
- In the Horn of Africa, we stepped up regional infrastructure to build resilience under the Horn of Africa Initiative.
- In the North Africa region, the team offered technical leadership on the review of the Regional Integration Strategy Paper (RISP - 2020- 2026) with conclusions expected in early 2025.
- RDRI also kept momentum on the need for a visa-free Africa, publishing the 9th edition of the Africa Visa Openness Index Report (AVOI), which measures the extent to which African countries are open to visitors from other African countries.



Illustrative Photo. Credit: Adamkaz from Getty Images Signature



Investing in the Building Blocks of Integration – RECs

Illustration - Canva Teams Photos

SPOTLIGHT: EAST AFRICA BOUNCES AHEAD THROUGH INTEGRATION

In 2024, RDRI promoted the AfDB's economic development efforts in East Africa, financing infrastructure, trade (AfCFTA), and agriculture projects to foster connectivity, inclusive growth and sustainable development.

One such investment is the Burundi-Rwanda Integrated Development Project in which the AfDB invested UA 313 million to enhance transport infrastructure, agricultural value chains, regional trade and link border areas to key corridors. The initiative is expected to benefit 2.6 million people directly - reducing border delays and improving access to resources and markets.

RDRI also supported Africa's health security and resilience through the Regional Pharmaceutical Sector Support Project (UA 9.2 million). The goal is to enhance production, innovation, and regulatory systems, in order to reduce dependency on imports, and improve health outcomes. These initiatives take on even greater significance given Africa's experience with the COVID 19 pandemic.

RDRI also led the AfDB's oversight of the EAC Capacity Project (UA 8.0 million), to build the East African Community's capacity to support trade facilitation, boost regional investments, and competitiveness including through regulatory frameworks.

Under the East African Power Pool project (UA 715,000), we also worked to better prepare the region for cross-border electricity trade through capacity-building initiatives, marking a key step in regional energy integration.

In another highlight, to help enhance connectivity for island states, support port upgrades and trade efficiency, through the Maritime Transport Corridor and Trade Facilitation Development Project (UA 101.5 million), RDRI advanced the AfDB's work in unlocking the potential of the Mozambique Channel.

Meanwhile, to strengthen the capacity of the African Union in supporting Africa's digital transformation, cybersecurity and coordination of Africa's development agenda, RDRI also led the AfDB's support to the AU under the Institutional Capacity Project (UA 8.2 million). This is very important especially as the AU commenced implementation of its Second Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063.

UA 313 Million

Amount AfDB has invested the Burundi-Rwanda Integrated Development Project, which will benefit 2.6 million people directly.

Financing Infrastructure to Integrate Africa



Illustrative photo Ikoyi Link Bridge, Lagos - Nigeria . GettyImages

The RDRI performance in 2024, supported large-scale transformative projects in sectors such as transport, renewable energy, water, and agriculture - key drivers of Africa's long-term transformation.

RDRI administers close to 25% of the African Development Fund (ADF). By March 2024, following the second prioritization exercise of the 16th ADF cycle, 83% of the resources had been earmarked - in response to demand across the AfDB's regional member countries.

This was more than double the performance achieved during ADF-15 (2020–2022).

By the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of ADF 16, in October 2024, a record 74% utilization of the Regional Operations Envelope (ROE) had been attained, which is up from 44% during ADF-15.

These allocations were to transformative, large-scale projects like the $3.9 billion Tanzania-Burundi-DRC railway – of which the AfDB contributed close to $700 million. In multi-sectoral terms, these projects are increasingly more integrated.

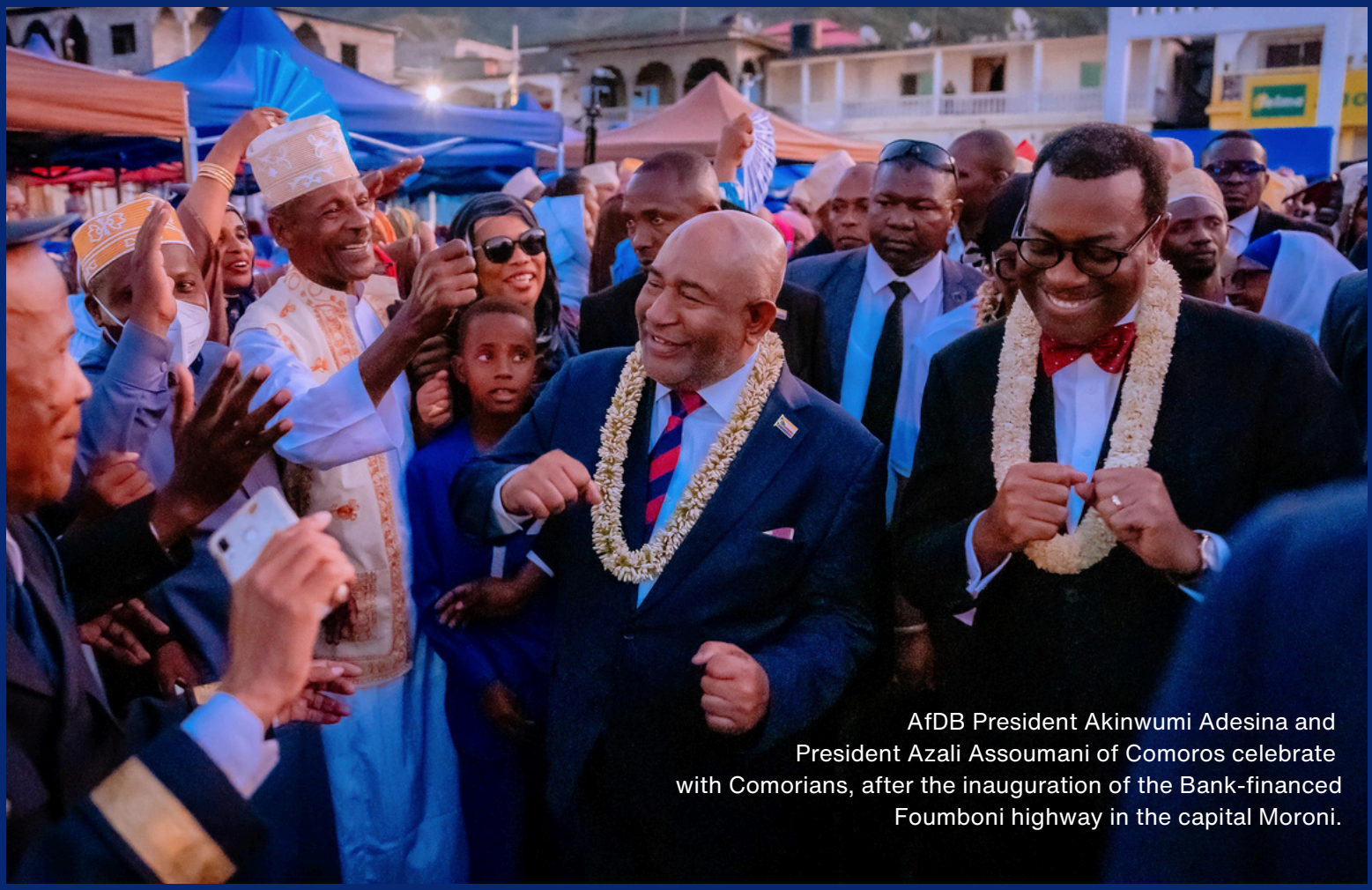
Additionally, selectivity saw an increase during this time with the average size of ADF regional operations growing more than 50% in the last 5 years, from UA 50 million (2019) to over UA 110 million (2023-24).

Further, financial engineering saw heightened use with projects increasingly blending concessional and non-concessional resources (ADB+ADF), including guarantees.

Finally, the leveraging abilities of the regional envelope saw progress – with $4.6 billion mobilized against a contribution of $ 1.4 billion from ADF at MTR.

Performance at MTR - Policy Commitments

- More than 42% of the resources from the regional envelop went to fragile regions (HoA, Lake Chad, G5), above the end of the cycle target of 30%.
- Six Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) related operations priotized, with three already approved.
- The Regional Envelope also supported multiple policy commitments under Light Up and Power Africa, Feed Africa; and Industrialize Africa.



AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina and President Azali Assoumani of Comoros celebrate with Comorians, after the inauguration of the Bank-financed Foumboni highway in the capital Moroni.



"Roads that unite. Flights that connect. Ports that drive trade. This is the promise of AfDB Group. A future where borders are bridges and opportunities flow."

DR JOY KATEGEKWA
Director RDRI

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS OF IMPACT

To Bolster Trade and Inclusive Economic Development



Illustration photo - Canva Teams Photos

- **The Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**

Deepening the partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat is crucial if we are to attain the ambition of the new AfDB Ten-Year Strategy. In July 2024, team RDRI met with H.E Wamkele Mene – Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat. We discussed how to leverage AfDB tools across a range of areas, including agriculture, private sector, infrastructure, gender, financing for women in business and much more – in order to accelerate operationalization of the AfCFTA and prepare businesses to tap into its market opportunities.



Intra-African trade and integration champions: RDRI Director Dr. Joy Kategekwa and H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat.



UNECA's Dr. Stephen Karingi and Professor Desta Melaku, with RDRI team in Abdijan.

- **Building best-in-class knowledge products on regional integration in Africa**

Dr. Stephen Karingi, Director - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNECA, and Professor Desta Melaku, Coordinator – Africa Trade Policy Centre (UNECA), visited the AfDB headquarters in Abidjan on 16 October to explore how our two institutions can offer thought leadership to advance operationalization of the AfCFTA.

Productive capacity through regional value chains, improving trade governance, ensuring Africa's private sector know and demand AfCFTA treatment, are some of the areas we will work on jointly in 2025.

• Getting youth to champion integration through innovation - UNDP

In November, Team RDRI also met with a delegation from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to discuss how to support young people's ideas that can accelerate integration, through innovation-driven hubs in agritech, healthtech, fintech, minetech, and greentech.

The AfDB's ICT Innovation Centres were also introduced, and conversations continue on how to work together for larger scale and impact.



Illustration photo - Canva Teams Photos



Dr. Caiphas Chekwoti, (2nd left) in a group photo with the RDRI team

• Creating the next corps of Africa's Regional Integration Specialists – The Trade Policy Centre in Africa (TRAPCA)

As Africa's aspirations to develop through regional integration grow, more African experts are needed to offer thought leadership and advise policy makers on strategy and technique. To advance this body of knowledge, the RDRI met with the Head of the Trade Policy Centre in Africa (TRAPCA) Dr. Caiphas Chekwoti, to take stock of needs in this area as well as to explore partnership that could accelerate domestication of the AfCFTA in its state parties, to achieve increase in preferential trade.

• The Horn of Africa Initiative





The 21st Ministerial Meeting of the Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI) held in Nairobi brought together Finance Ministers from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan, and development partners to review regional projects and address shared challenges.

RDRI's Chief Regional Integration Coordinator for East Africa, Patrick Kanyimbo (insert) presented a portfolio review, highlighting progress, implementation gaps, and strategies to improve outcomes through collaboration.

The portfolio assessment included 27 projects supported by the World Bank, European Union and African Development Bank. At least 75% of the programmes are functioning satisfactorily, or better.

To reach even better delivery targets, Mr. Kanyimbo (insert) advocated for improved capacity, reinforced fiduciary mechanisms, regular reviews and stakeholder participation.

This is a critical initiative building cooperation and collective approaches to tackling challenges including those related to fragility, climate resilience, trade facilitation and water management. The Borderlands Roadmap was approved as a regional flagship project.

Expanding Dialogue
for Policy Change
The Integrate Africa Public Lecture Series



On 26 November, the RDRI Integrate Africa Public Lecture Series on regional integration and development in Africa, was launched in Gaborone Botswana under the theme:
"Can Africa Afford Not to Integrate?"

The inaugural Lecture was delivered by RDRI Director Dr. Joy Kategekwa, made a passionate call for a faster pace on integration to ensure aspirations around the AfCFTA are attained for the benefit of Africans.

Warning of the consequences of delayed African integration, she stated: "16 landlocked nations and 107 unique borders, inefficiencies in transport and trade, cost Africa billions annually, hindering cross-border commerce and industrial growth."

She explained how the AfDB has invested more than $10 billion over the past ten years, financing transformative infrastructure projects such as transport corridors, border posts, and bridges.

But she also emphasized that there is need for political will, strategic investments, and collective action in addressing infrastructure deficits, eliminating non-tariff barriers, and driving policy coherence.

Speaking at the same event, SADC Deputy Executive Secretary, Dr. Judith Kateera offered:

"The case for cooperation and integration has become stronger, not weaker. Regional cooperation and integration constitute an indisputable springboard to integrate the Continent effectively into the world economy and share the benefits of globalization."

Speaking days later at the second public lecture in Kigali, Rwanda, Dr. Kategekwa argued for a unified Africa to tackle shared challenges, including restrictive visa policies and legal implementation hurdles.

"Without integration, Africa risks perpetuating its over-reliance on exporting raw materials, while importing high-value goods - a pattern that stifles industrialization and job creation, she said.

In agreement, the University's acting Vice Chancellor Professor Kayihura Muganga Didas stressed that faster integration under the AfCFTA is critical for Africa's sustainable development and prosperity.

"Regional cooperation and integration constitute an indisputable springboard to integrate the Continent effectively."

DR. JUDITH KATEERA,
Deputy Executive Secretary, SADC

#IntegrateAfrica



Launch of Africa Visa Openness Index 2024

Getting Africans to move and integrate – visa free

On 25th November, at the 2024 Africa Economic Conference in Gaborone-Botswana, RDRI launched the 9th edition of the Africa Visa Openness Index (AVOI) Report.

The Report, jointly produced by the AfDB and the African Union Commission measures how freely Africans can travel within the continent by tracking the visa policies of all 54 countries in Africa.

Its findings show that 28% of intra-African travel is now visa-free, an improvement from 20% in 2016. Additionally, 25% of travel allows for visas on arrival, but 47% still require visas before departure, a slight increase from 2023.

Benin, The Gambia, Rwanda and Seychelles lead the Index, offering visa-free access to all Africans. Regionally, the ECOWAS ranks highest with a score of 0.629, followed by SADC with 0.547.

Notably, Sierra Leone recorded the biggest improvement - allowing visa-free entry for citizens from 15 countries, up from 13 in 2023.

The report recommends removal of visas, expanding affordable e-visa systems, enhancing reciprocity and removing travel barriers to boost trade, tourism, and mobility. By doing so, this will stimulate a dynamic socio-economic trajectory.

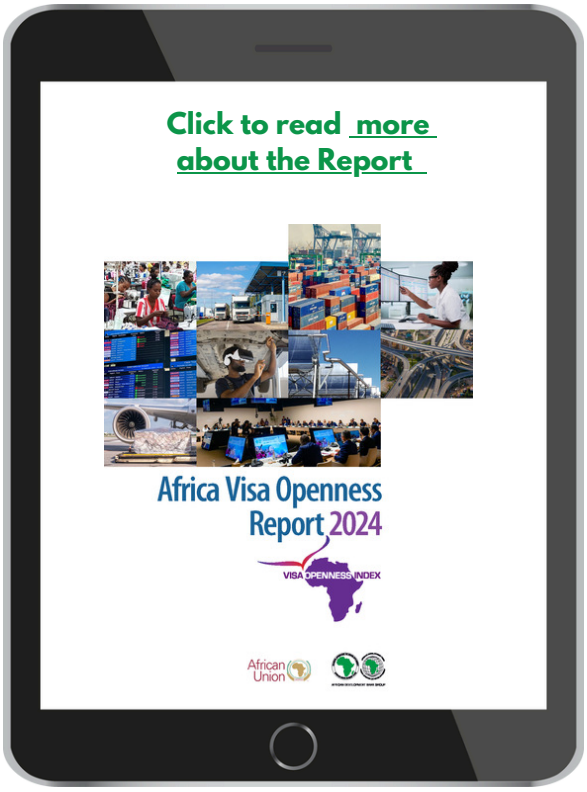
The report also calls for visa-free access related to the AfCFTA.

In her call to action at the launch, Dr. Joy Kategekwa, Director RDRI said:

"You and I are starting a movement today. We shall advocate for visa– free access across Africa. When we come back next year to launch the 10th edition of AVOI, each one of you will testify to progress made, thanks to championing free movement."

28%

Travel within Africa is now Visa-Free



Can the AfCFTA Build Economic Resilience for Africa in These Uncertain Times?



Illustrative photo - cargo at the Port of Durban (Credit: Creative Commons)

In the face of increasing global uncertainty, a call to action was made at a high-level dialogue hosted by RDRI at the 2024 African Economic Conference in Gaborone - Botswana, urging African leaders and policymakers to transform adversity into opportunity through the AfCFTA.

Hosted under the theme *"Can the AfCFTA Build Economic Resilience for Africa in These Uncertain Times?"*, the event examined the AfCFTA's potential to shield Africa from economic shocks and foster economic stability, integration, and inclusive growth across the continent.

The high-level dialogue, featured a panel of experts and leaders in regional integration and trade, including Jaswinder Bedi, CEO of Bedi Investments; Dr. Nevine Nabil Nakhla, CEO of El Gondy, a AfCFTA Trading Company in Egypt; Mr. Dhunraj Kassee, Director of Industrial Development and Trade at SADC; Mr. Gilberto Antonio, Senior Advisor to the Secretary-General at the AfCFTA Secretariat; Mr. Samson Arega, Group Vice President - Customer Service Experience of Ethiopian Airlines; Ms. Allen Asiimwe, Chief of Programmes at TradeMark Africa; and Dr. Joy Kategekwa.

Each panelist brought unique insights into the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA, which set the stage for an in-depth exploration of how to bring to life the continental initiative's transformative potential.

Opening African skies

Another distinguished panelist, Mr. Samson Arega, Senior Vice President from Ethiopian Airlines underscored the importance of connectivity and air transport in moving goods and people around Africa. He offered an update on the reach of Ethiopian Airlines' fleet across Africa, the strategic partnerships that have been built over time, including in southern and western Africa. He also urged African countries to implement the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), which institutes mechanisms for collaboration regarding open skies in Africa.

The dialogue examined the AfCFTA's potential to shield Africa from economic shocks and foster economic stability, integration, and inclusive growth across the continent.



Can the AfCFTA build economic resilience for Africa in these uncertain times? Panelists discuss the topic at the high-level dialogue hosted by RDRI at the African Economic Conference.

Using the story of Airbus, Mr Arega recalled how four European countries came together to form a company that made aircrafts, with production taking place in different countries. This was a regional value chain in action. He encouraged Africa to build from this experience and create its own Airbus. He further shared how Ethiopian Airlines was helping build the aviation industry in some African countries including through partnerships with Togo's ASky Airlines, but challenged the African Development Bank to lead the effort in advocating for open skies as a metric for advancing regional integration in Africa.

> **Africa's success largely depends on integration, with AfCFTA as the core lever.**

Unique insights

Mr. Jaswinder Bedi used the example of tea to show the audience how he navigates the AfCFTA tariff book, singling out tariff lines that had already been lowered and how he benefits from them in different markets across Africa. This changed the energy in the room because his contribution affirmed that some things are working

The agreed Rules of Origin are already at 92.4%, an indication that substantially, all the trade (a WTO legal requirement for these types of Free TradeAreas) can be covered and now take place underthe AfCFTA.

Supporting women-led enterprises

Real life examples of trade facilitated through the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative were also shared by women industry leader Dr. Nakhla who demonstrated how her Egyptian company - El Gondy, aggregates the consignments of women-led enterprises ,and is exporting to countries across Africa including Ghana, which is a particularly crucial pick, because pre-AfCFTA, there was no trade regime that connected the two countries.

This is the true value the AfCFTA brings. Going beyond deepening trade in RECs and latching inter-REC trade together through a system of preferential rules.

In her contribution, Ms. Allen Asiimwe, singled out the importance of building trust amongst African traders as a major impediment to intra-Africa trade. She underscored the importance of digital reforms, mutual recognition of standards and the inclusion of women and SMEs in AfCFTA.

The event ended with the announcement of a partnership between Ethiopian Airlines and Egypt's Women AfCFTA Exporters.

In closing, Dr. Joy Kategekwa shared that the AfDB's Ten-Year Strategy is built on hope, optimism and the idea that Africa can make it, and AfDB is playing a pivotal role in achieving this vision. She emphasized that Africa's success largely depends on integration, with AfCFTA as the core lever.

About RDRI

Located within the Regional Development, Integration, and Business Delivery Complex (RDVP), and as the custodian of Integrate Africa, the Regional Integration Coordination Office (RDRI) helps to ensure strategic, programmatic, and operational coherence, as well as the efficient and transparent allocation of resources for regional operations and regional public goods.

The Department supports high-level policy dialogue with the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Communities, the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and related intergovernmental organizations to streamline cooperation mechanisms, drive investments, and promote reforms that accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2063, Integrate Africa, and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.

Internally, the Department helps mainstream regional integration into the Bank's strategies and operations. It monitors the performance of the regional integration portfolio, generates lessons-learned through periodic reviews, and provides strategic, policy, and operational insights to senior management to improve performance.

The Department also pioneers the design, publication, and maintenance of flagship analytical products and advocacy tools such as the Africa Visa Openness Index and the Africa Regional Integration Index.



Team RDRI meets with H.E. Wamkele Mene Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat.

Get Involved

At RDRI, we believe in the power of collaboration and shared experiences to drive meaningful change. As we embark on this exciting journey with our first issue of the The Regional Integration Brief, we invite YOU — our readers and stakeholders, to be an integral part of shaping the future of the Integrate Africa agenda.

Do you have a story of how regional integration has positively impacted your community or industry? Have you contributed to advancing integration in your sector? Do you know an individual, group of persons or organizations working towards an Africa integrated? Or do you have innovative ideas on what we can do to accelerate progress towards a more integrated and prosperous Africa?

We want to hear from you! Share your impact stories, contributions, or suggestions with us, and let's build a more integrated Africa together.

Email your submissions or feedback with
#IntegrateAfrica in the subject line:

b.dowuona-hammond@afdb.org cc. media@afdb.org

(If selected, your submissions may be featured in our subsequent editions)

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