The A-REC Visa
(Africa Regional Economic Visa)

Proposed by
The Center for Law & Innovation Policy
AfCFTA Strategic Objectives

**Single Market**
- creating a single market for goods and services, facilitated by the movement of people

**Free Movement**
- contributing to the movement of capital and people and facilitating investment

**Customs Union**
- creating a continental customs union

**Trade**
- expanding intra-African trade

**Harmonization**
- resolving the challenges of overlapping memberships in regional economic arrangements

**Economic Development**
- promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development

**Industrialization**
- boosting industrial development; and

**Competitiveness**
- enhancing competitiveness.
The Problem
(Policy and Procedure)

• Even though AfCFTA aims to establish a single market with unfettered movement of people and goods, intra–African trade is severely stifled by non–tariff barriers

  • Arbitrary colonial boundaries drawn without consideration to people or their heritage

  • Thick borders - burdensome procedures for clearing goods, bureaucratic red tape

  • Lack of coordination/uniformity between countries’ technical regulations, standards and policies on licenses and permits

  • Visa requirements
The Problem
(Man-made barriers)

- Poor integrative infrastructure / channels across the continent
- Intra-continental flights can be more expensive than flights transiting through Europe / Asia
- Protracted visa processing & delays create environment ripe for corruption
- According to the Africa Visa Openness Index, Africans need visas to enter 55% of states within the continent.

- Transparency International (TI): Drivers spent an average of 72 hours at Rwanda-Tanzania customs stations obtaining customs clearance.

- The World Bank economist Paul Brenton: A truck serving supermarkets across a Southern Africa border may need to carry up to 1600 documents to comply with different countries' requirements.

- Barriers disproportionately affect small businesses, thereby hampering growth
The Inspiration
The Schengen Visa

Over 15 million Schengen visa users travelled around Europe in 2019

- > 25 European countries
- Common border control rules
- Common crime fighting rules
- Strengthening of common judicial system and police cooperation
- Multiple visa categories: business, visit, medical etc.
- Single entry, double entry or multiple entry visa options
The AfCFTA Solution
A-REC Visa

• Regional Economic Communities (RECs) visa, to cover specific geographic /economic areas

• REC Framework can be leveraged for Regional Visa Program

• Opportunity to resolve REC overlaps
TARGET

The A-REC visas will be available to Africans on the continent who need a visa to visit another Economic bloc.

Non-Africans including tourists and businesses people
The Impact

- Regional visas will enhance movement and trade
- Increase cooperation in regional security and economic policy through the establishment of common data bases to manage biometrics and the visa process
- Boost intra-continent collaboration for crime fighting and law enforcement – (Afri-Pol?)
- Set the continent on the path to operationalizing the unification of the African Union
- Provide a framework for increased cooperation, integration, and policy reform in Africa
- Positively impact wages, through competition
- Leverage economies of scale much needed for investments and returns within bankable terms
The Impact

- Eliminate the costs of immigration control at national borders
- Help to diversify local economies
- Increase continent earnings from tourism
- Expedite knowledge transfer and technological progress
- Drive efficiency supply chain and logistics
- Diversify pool of available products to population
- Create increased migration opportunities
- Leverage natural existing relationships
- Build a foundation to facilitate adoption of the AU passport
The Impact

- By allowing the free movement of goods, services, and people across Africa, it is estimated that AfCFTA could help to increase combined consumer and business spending on the continent to $6.7 trillion by 2030.

- Regional visas will drive increased production scale, enhancing competitiveness for made in Africa products and services through reliance on economies of scale.

- Regional visa will also provide continental market access and facilitate distribution of resources across the continent.