

# The A-REC Visa

(Africa Regional Economic Visa)

Proposed by

*The Center for Law & Innovation Policy*

## Regional Economic Communities

The African Union recognises eight different RECs under its administration:

- Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)
- East African Community (EAC)
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)



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# 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 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

## Regional Economic Communities

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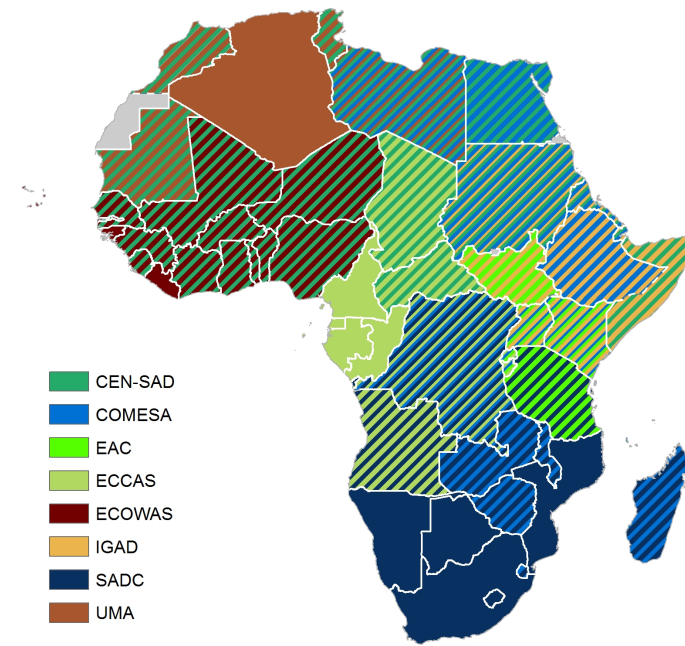
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# TARGET

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



Area	Population (2020)
CEN-SAD	(659 MILLION)
ECOWAS	(349 MILLION)
UMA	(103 MILLION)
EAC	(177 MILLION)
SADC	(345 MILLION)
COMESA	(390 MILLION)
IGAD	(92 MILLION )
COMESA	(390 MILLION)

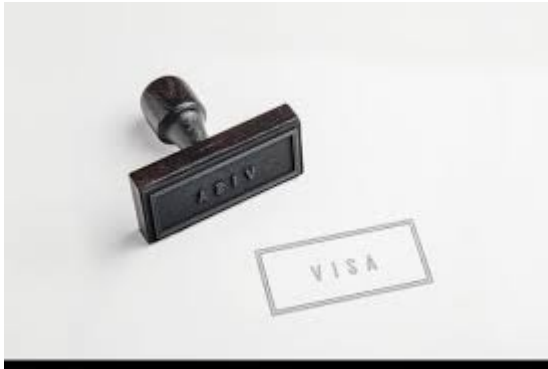
# The Impact



- 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.

## 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Promote sustainable economic growth full and productive employment, and decent work for all

## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable"

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

# Applicable SDG's

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