

HIGHLIGHTS | 2025

TOGETHER, WE TURNED 2025 INTO A YEAR THAT CONNECTED PEOPLE, MARKETS, AND OPPORTUNITIES.

High Achievers

Kimco Coffee was chosen as the venue to host the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Roasting Training in Uganda. This opportunity has not only elevated Kimco's roastery profile but also highlighted its commitment to excellence.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to host the SCA Roasting Training at Kimco Coffee. The reputation and credibility that Kimco Coffee Roastery has gained is a direct result of the ITC MARKUP II program's support. Since the training, we have seen significant impact, including gaining six new clients and receiving interest from over 25 roasters eager to participate in future sessions," she said



HOW IS MARTHA WANDERA DELIVERING TOP-QUALITY COFFEE AND BRINGING UGANDA'S COFFEE TO THE WORLD?

Fifteen participants earned their Intermediate level certification in SCA Roasting.

Both SCA and CQI are internationally recognized institutions that provide courses to standardize

knowledge, understanding, and terminology across the coffee value chain. These certifications validate their expertise, enhance their credibility, and enables them to deliver coffee that better meets consumer demands consistently.

Earlier, Kimco Coffee also had the chance to exhibit at Uganda-EU Business Insights 2025 in Kampala with support from EU-EAC MARKUP II.



This partnership with EU-EAC MARKUP II continues to empower Kimco Coffee to expand its reach delivering a top quality product and contribute to the growth of Uganda’s coffee industry internationally.

“At the Uganda-EU Business Insights 2025, we connected with other exhibitors and attendees and learned about EU regulations and the importance of compliance to access EU markets. This knowledge is strengthening our position in the coffee industry and building our confidence to grow. Thanks to the European Union, the East African Community’s MARKUP II, and the International Trade Centre.”

ERNEST NDUMORARO FROM COCOCA —A UNION OF COFFEE GROWER COOPERATIVES IN BURUNDI

Why buy coffee from Burundi, despite the challenges?

When long-time buyer Pascale Schuit sat down with Ernest Ndumoraro from COCOCA—a union of coffee grower cooperatives in Burundi—she had a clear answer to that question.

Faces of MARKUP II



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Market Linkage



WE WERE AT THE WORLD OF COFFEE IN GENEVA

40 coffee companies participated in the World of Coffee, Europe’s largest coffee trade fair, held in Geneva this year. With support from the EU-EAC MARKUP II programme, their participation facilitated valuable market linkages within the EU market and beyond. It also provided an opportunity to gather market intelligence on consumer demand trends, competitor offerings, and emerging opportunities in the global coffee sector.

We had conversations with several participants to learn about their experiences.



Watch on Youtube

Market Linkage



AFRICA SOURCING AND FASHION WEEK HELD IN NAIROBI

Nairobi: 17 leather footwear and accessories manufacturers and tanneries from Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Tanzania exhibited at the Africa Sourcing and Fashion Week (ASFW) 2025 held in Nairobi, Kenya.

As part of the European Union (EU)-funded EU–East African Community (EAC) MARKUP II programme, the International Trade Centre (ITC) facilitated the participation of these leather businesses specializing in footwear and accessories from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan. The delegation also included business support organizations (BSOs) and key institutional partners.

This initiative created new business opportunities and significantly boosted international visibility for East Africa’s leather sector.

On the sidelines, ITC also hosted a high-level panel discussion titled “The Future of East Africa’s Regional Leather Industry: Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities.” in partnership with the African Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI).

The panel brought together industry experts, policymakers, and business leaders to address key challenges facing the sector, including limited value addition, infrastructure deficits, and environmental sustainability.



Angela Becaty, ITC Regional Coordinator for the EU-EAC MARKUP II programme, said: *“The demand for footwear is growing in the EAC. If we could fill the gaps in demand through locally produced leather footwear, there is a potential to create hundreds of thousands of jobs.”*

“ITC reaffirms its strong commitment to the EAC Secretariat and all our Partner States. With support from the EU, through MARKUP II, we’re here to support capacity building, policy alignment, and improved access to regional and international markets.”

Jimmy Odhiambo, the current EAC Chair, Ministry of Investments, Trade, and Industry Kenya in his opening remarks said: *“This forum is instrumental in highlighting the vital role that leather associations can play in creating a more creative, inclusive and competitive industry. Associations are the connective tissue of the value-chain. They amplify voices, foster collaboration and create pathways to scale.”*

Adrian Njau, Acting Executive Director, East African Business Council also participated in the discussion.



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Youtube

The 2025, edition went beyond EAC countries to include a broader audience from ALLPI member states, making the exchange experience even more enriching and technically robust.

Business Support

BURUNDI TRADE INFORMATION PORTAL UPGRADE TO ADVANCE TRADE COMPETITIVENESS

The Burundi Trade Information Portal (TIP) has recently been upgraded as part of the broader EU-EAC MARKUP II initiative, which aims to boost intra-African and EU-Africa trade by improving market access and enhancing SME competitiveness.



What's New?

The upgraded portal now offers updated, user-friendly, and institution-certified trade procedures, enabling businesses to independently and efficiently access the information they need. Easy access to accurate trade data will strengthen the competitiveness of traders and support deeper integration at both the regional and continental levels.



Building capacity to maximize benefits

A workshop was held targeting business stakeholders and policymakers to enhance understanding and raise awareness about the features and benefits of the Trade Information Portals among businesses, stakeholders, and policymakers.



The training gathered 62 participants, including 14 women and 19 youth, representing priority value chains such as coffee, tea, avocado, and essential oils. Key institutions including the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism, Burundi Bureau of Standards (BBN), Burundi Revenue Authority (OBR), and the East African Business Council (EABC) attended.

The training helped support participants in using the portals to meet national and regional trade regulations effectively and equip them with the skills needed to navigate and utilize the portals confidently.

TIP is a key component of Burundi's customs modernization and trade facilitation agenda. It directly addresses one of the biggest challenges faced by economic operators: the lack of access to reliable trade information. In the long run, providing free, real-time, and transparent access to trade procedures reduces unpredictable costs, limits corruption risks, and boosts public revenues.

HOW TO MAKE SMOOTH AND RICH CHOCOLATE?



"Thank you for selecting me to participate in the chocolate making course. I tremendously, enjoyed learning about a complicated process in simple language," said Ambassador Wasswa Biriga expressing his appreciation for the training.

A chocolate-making training and coaching session was held at the African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) Coffee Campus in Kampala.

Held in January, participants working in cocoa value chain gathered to deepen their understanding of chocolate production through hands-on learning and expert-led coaching.

The training was a unique opportunity for refining their skills in chocolate making.



THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) TRADE PROMOTION ORGANIZATIONS (TPOS) TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (TWG) MEETING

The East African Community (EAC) Trade Promotion Organizations (TPOs) Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting took place from March 24 to 27, 2025, in Kampala, Uganda.

The International Trade Centre (ITC), in collaboration with the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat and Partner States, organized the meeting, which marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts of the European Union (EU) funded EU-EAC Market Access Upgrade Programme (MARKUP II).

Key discussions at the meeting focused on refining the work programme and preparing for the EAC participation at the 2025 Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) in Algiers, Algeria, from September 4 to 10, 2025.

Mr. Cleopas Ndorere . Ministry of Trade, industry and Cooperatives (MTIC) - Commissioner of External trade speaking on the occasion said, *“Our objective is to ensure that Uganda not only competes globally but also thrives as a hub for regional and international trade.*

Today Uganda is faced with more trade opportunities which manifest themselves in the various regional and international blocs such as the EAC, COMESA, the Tripartite and the AfCFTA and EU.

The government of Uganda continues to enjoy cordial trade and economic developmental partnerships with The European Union (EU), International Trade Centre (ITC) and EAC Partner States through EAC Secretariat. The government of Uganda is grateful to the European Union funded initiatives like MARKUP II, Implemented by ITC in partnership with EAC Secretariat.”

“Ms. Annete Ssemwemba Deputy Secretary General Customs, Trade and Monetary Affairs East African Community in her remarks said, *“We are grateful to our partners, International Trade Centre and the European Union, for their invaluable support to the East African Community (EAC) region under MARKUP II. Specifically, their contributions to the formation of the Technical Working Group (TWG) for Trade Promotion Organizations have been instrumental. The TWG serves as a unique platform for addressing common challenges and exploring collaborative solutions. Together, we represent a collective commitment to advancing trade, investment, and economic growth across our Partner States and regions. This will enhance our visibility in international markets, open doors for new market opportunities, and strengthen our presence in existing ones.”*

Mr. Sagoh Djete, EU Programme Manager for Regional Cooperation - Infrastructure, EU Delegation to Tanzania and the East African Community (EAC), said: *“A well-coordinated EAC TPO network will provide critical support to businesses by helping MSMEs identify and access new market opportunities within the EAC and globally. This will encourage intra-EAC sourcing and production synergies to increase value addition and competitiveness.”*

Ms. Miyoba Lubemba, Snr Programme Officer, Institutions and Ecosystems, ITC briefed participants about EU-EAC MARKUP II support to the EAC TPO Technical Working Group.

EU-EAC MARKUP II is supporting the establishment and operationalization of a network of EAC Trade Promotion Organizations (TPOs) that have a crucial role to play in developing and promoting exports, thereby enhancing SME competitiveness.

However, many TPOs face challenges in fulfilling their mandates due to limited resources and capacity. Through regional cooperation, as exemplified by the EAC TPO Technical Working Group, strategic trade development efforts are significantly strengthened. This cooperation facilitates a range of activities including information exchange about business opportunities, organizing joint trade missions, exhibitions, and optimizing limited resources for greater impact.

This initiative by EU-EAC MARKUP II will be instrumental in focusing on enhancing SMEs' capacities and opportunities for business and export growth.

It is important to note that the 44th Meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers on Trade, Industry, Finance, and Investment (SCTIFI) in May 2024 approved the creation of the EAC TPO Technical Working Group. Furthermore, the subsequent approval of the Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding set the foundation for deeper cooperation among EAC TPOs.

During the 45th SCTIFI Meeting in November 2024,

the EAC Secretariat was directed to develop a comprehensive work programme for the Technical Working Group to ensure that the cooperation would yield tangible benefits for all involved. The recent meeting in Kampala was a critical step in this process.

Following the meeting, the ITC also organized a Networking Debrief for the EAC Secretariat and the CEOs of the Partner States' TPOs. This debrief updated the EU delegation on the ongoing support provided by EU-EAC MARKUP II to the EAC TPO TWG and to foster networking opportunities with key stakeholders from the EAC Secretariat, TPOs, and the ITC.

By building stronger linkages and collaborative engagement, the EAC TPO Technical Working Group is paving the way for improved trade development actions at national, regional, continental, and global levels. The group's work will play a pivotal role in advancing the targets outlined in the EAC Export Promotion Strategy, ensuring long-term benefits for SMEs and the broader EAC region.



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THE EAC REGIONAL QUALITY AWARDS 2025 TO BE HELD THIS MONTH.



The process for the 2025 EAC Regional Quality Awards, the region's highest recognition for excellence in quality performance, was launched on 14th April 2025 in Arusha, Tanzania. The Regional winners will be announced at a ceremony in Nairobi, Kenya this month.

The EAC Regional Quality Awards competition is an annual event implemented in accordance with the Awards Framework, which was approved by the East African Standards Committee (EASC) during its April 2022 meeting in Arusha, Tanzania.

The Quality Awards are dedicated to promoting a culture of quality, and inspiring excellence by recognising outstanding achievements by EAC enterprises in quality management, across all sectors of the economy within the EAC region. The Awards are open to both Large Enterprises (Les) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in both service and manufacturing sectors, for recognition of the winners at the EAC level.

Business Support

MAKING BURUNDI'S AVOCADOS, ESSENTIAL OILS, AND TEA GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE



MARKUP II's coaching sessions in Burundi continued, focusing on avocado, essential oils, and tea. These workshops are designed to enhance product quality and competitiveness, ultimately helping to establish Burundi's reputation for these products in international markets.

From June 9–13, 2025, Leather Cluster Design Workshop was held in Dar es Salaam. The event was organized under the European Union (EU) funded EU-EAC MARKUP II programme by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the East African Community (EAC), in partnership with the Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI). Participants included leather processors, footwear and goods manufacturers, academic designers, distributors, raw hide suppliers, and government officials.

LEATHER CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT IN TANZANIA

The workshop aimed to strengthen national capacity to design and implement leather sector clusters. It focused on increasing local value addition, job creation, and improving Tanzania's position in the global leather value chain.





The country currently produces 3 million pairs of shoes annually but imports over 54 million, mostly synthetic or second-hand.

Safari Fungo, EU-EAC MARKUP II National Coordinator in Tanzania, highlighted the potential in local school footwear production. With over 14 million students in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools, domestic demand for school shoes is significant.

A key outcome of the workshop was the initiation of the Dar es Salaam Leather Cluster (DLC).

Participants developed a strategic plan, governance framework, and roadmap for formal registration as a cooperative. An interim leadership committee was also elected.

The cluster model is intended to support micro, small, and medium enterprises through shared infrastructure, joint procurement, and improved access to markets—particularly institutional buyers like schools.

ACCESS TO FINANCE BOOTCAMP



Participants gained valuable insights into business strategy, financial management, legal frameworks and regulations for enterprises, and investor readiness.

The bootcamp programme covered a range of topics, including estimating the financial needs, financial statement analysis, budgeting and forecasting, and strategies for attracting investment.

"We were reminded that numbers don't lie. I am more motivated than ever to focus on getting our financial ratios in the right direction and increasing our revenue flows" Yolanda Odida, the CEO Pure Purple shares the reasons behind her motivation.



An intensive two-day Access to Finance Bootcamp took place in Nairobi on February 5th and 6th.

Twenty SMEs from Kenya's coffee and leather industries successfully completed the bootcamp, which was designed to equip SMEs with the knowledge and skills necessary to secure funding for growth, bringing together entrepreneurs and leading financial and legal experts.

Participants gained valuable insights into business strategy, financial management, legal frameworks and regulations for enterprises, and investor readiness.

The bootcamp programme covered a range of topics, including estimating the financial needs, financial statement analysis,

budgeting and forecasting, and strategies for attracting investment.

Participants had the opportunity to exchange their experiences with their peers and learn from other export-ready companies.

The highlight of the event was the participation of prominent financial institutions such as ABSA (Kelvin Mwukiu), HRSV (Vera Wachira), and MCE Social Impact (Wairimu Miano). Representatives from these organizations provided tailored advice and guidance on accessing suitable financial products and services.

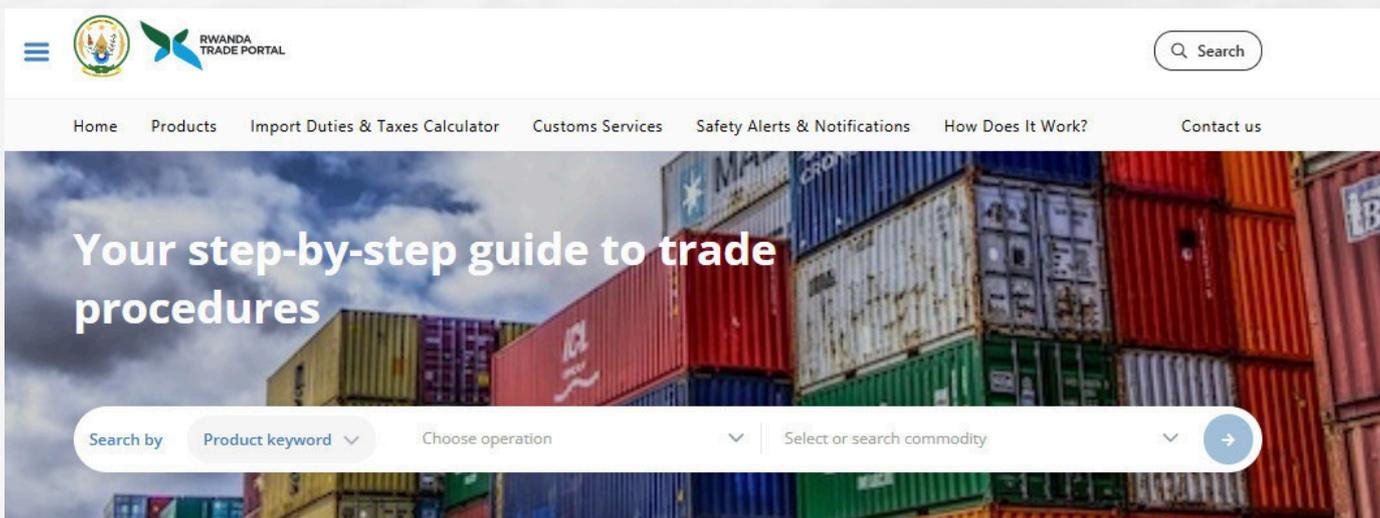
The bootcamp also provided the first opportunity for businesses to connect with financial experts.

The wide range of financing options provided to businesses helped them gain a deeper understanding of the available funding landscape and how to select the most suitable solutions for their unique needs and growth goals.

The Access to Finance Bootcamp is part of the European Union (EU) funded EU-East African Community (EAC) Market Access Upgrade Programme (MARKUP II) ongoing initiative to support the growth and development of SMEs in Kenya. It is implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat and national partners in the recipient countries.

By equipping entrepreneurs with the essential tools and resources, the programme seeks to stimulate economic growth and create job opportunities.

"Thank you for the opportunity to acquire skills that will enable us to accelerate the growth of our business. This training will be invaluable in helping us assess the health of our business and make strategic adjustments where necessary." – Simon Gakinya, Director of Mount Kenya Specialty Tea & Coffee Co. Ltd.



HOW IS RWANDA ACCELERATING EXPORT REFORMS?

The National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) has launched new initiatives to simplify export formalities with a focus on improving the trade environment for small exporters.

Several key measures are now in place, making trade easier for small businesses:

- Licensing and regulatory burden reduced
- Risk-based import controls introduced
- Pro-business fee structure adopted

The Government of Rwanda is working closely with the International Trade Centre (ITC) under the EU-funded EU-EAC

MARKUP II programme, UNCTAD, and other partners and has advanced a bold agenda to simplify and digitalize export procedures.

In collaboration with Rwanda's National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC), ITC has supported a series of technical workshops and consultations aimed at modernizing non-customs export procedures. A pivotal workshop held in Rubavu in June 2024 convened public and private stakeholders to review export processes for coffee, avocado, and horticultural products—key sectors in Rwanda's export diversification strategy.

Following the workshop, a comprehensive report with actionable recommendations was submitted to the NTFC. A technical committee reviewed and endorsed a roadmap for reform implementation. One year later, several impactful measures are now fully operational, making trade more accessible for small businesses.

These changes are now reflected in the Rwanda Trade Portal, which was updated following a field visit by the portal team to NAEB in June 2025.



Sustainability



WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF MARKUP II SUPPORTING SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFICATION ACROSS EAST AFRICA?

A post-coaching evaluation and impact assessment was conducted on the voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) training delivered in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The assessment, carried out in March–April 2025, reviewed training activities held between May and July 2024.

252 participants (92 women and 106 youth) provided their feedback having attended eight workshops. 53 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that received tailored coaching from October 2024 to March 2025 were featured in the response. A total of 41 SMEs responded

to the assessment.

39 of the 41 SMEs reported implementing sustainability practices after the coaching. 19 SMEs gained access to new markets thanks to certification efforts, supported by expert coaching and guidance on certification costs.

The coaching indirectly reached over 42,000 farmers, either as out-growers or as part of organized farmer groups—extending the impact of sustainability practices across the region.

GEOLOCATION TRAINING IN RWANDA TO FACILITATE EUDR COMPLIANCE



Geolocation Data Collection Workshop to prepare Rwandan coffee producers for compliance with the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), was held in Huye, Rwanda.

The workshop that was held in February brought together 25 participants—including 3 women—from the third cohort of coffee producers, cooperatives, and exporters.

The session was also attended by the Chairperson of the Coffee Exporters and Processors Association of Rwanda (CEPAR), reflecting strong support from the private sector.

Participants deepened their understanding of EUDR requirements and gained hands-on skills in geolocation data collection—an essential element for in coffee exports to the EU. These efforts are helping to ensure that Rwandan coffee stakeholders are well-prepared to meet evolving international market standards.

EUDR is a key element of the EU Green Deal, a set of proposals and regulations to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

Considering the far-reaching impact on global deforestation, the EUDR aims to play a pivotal role in curbing deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions, and global biodiversity loss.

Women and Youth



The East African Women in Business Platform (EAWiBP), conducted a five-day Master Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop in Nairobi. The training, titled "Communicating About My Business for Market Success," equipped women entrepreneurs with the tools to better position their businesses for regional and international trade.

MASTER TRAINERS WORKSHOP HELD IN NAIROBI TO EMPOWER WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Held in early September, the workshop brought together 12 Master Trainers from all six East African Community (EAC) Partner States—Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. These trainers will play a key role in rolling out the program nationally, ensuring a ripple effect of knowledge and capacity-building across the region.

The training later expanded to include 30 women entrepreneurs from Kenya, offering a hands-on learning experience that fostered peer exchange and practical application of key communication strategies.

Key objectives included:

- Strengthening communication, leadership, and facilitation capacities of trainers
- Adapting training content to fit local contexts and varying business maturity levels
- Promoting regional peer learning and harmonized approaches to capacity building
- Creating a strong network of certified trainers to scale the program across EAC countries

Enhancing business communication skills, developing compelling narratives for market engagement, and increasing business visibility and competitiveness were the focus areas of the training.

Under the MARKUP II framework, ITC's SheTrades initiative continues to support women entrepreneurs by improving their access to global markets through skills development, networking, and trade opportunities.





YOUTH AGRIPRENEURS BUILD SKILLS IN BURUNDI AND SOUTH SUDAN

Young agripreneurs in Bujumbura (Burundi) and Juba (South Sudan) took part in an intensive training programme focused on market access and business development in agriculture.

The programme started with a two-day Training of Trainers (ToT), where local facilitators were equipped with the skills and tools to support youth-led agri-business initiatives.

This was followed by a three-day Bootcamp in each location, designed to be highly practical and hands-on. Participants learned how to segment their markets, define their target customers, and develop strong value propositions. They also worked on structuring their ideas using the Business Model Canvas, and explored strategies for positioning, sales, and communication.

To wrap up, the programme featured a pitch training session where participants practiced delivering clear, compelling presentations. By the end of the week, these young agripreneurs were more confident, better prepared, and ready to lead innovative agricultural ventures in their communities.





MARKUP II

EU-EAC Market Access Upgrade Programme Phase II

A regional development initiative that promotes economic growth in the East African Community (EAC) through private sector development and export promotion.

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