



THE INTER-UNIVERSITY  
COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA

# **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EAST AFRICAN COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

**2022-2026**





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Inter-University Council for East Africa is a strategic institution of the East Africa Community responsible for the development & coordination of Higher Education and Research in the region. IUCEA as one of the institutions of the Community supports the integration process through facilitating higher education as a conduit to the realization of a fully integrated East African Community. This has been done through development of several frameworks key among which is the Common Market Protocol of the declaration of the EAC as a Common Higher Education Area (CHEA) by the 18th Summit of the EAC Heads of State on 20th May 2017.

The CHEA is aimed at harmonizing higher education and training systems in EAC, to facilitate & enable mobility of students and staff and promote free movement of labour, people, and services as envisioned under the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (1999) and the Common Market Protocol (2010).

The implementation strategy and roadmap is therefore a critical document in the monitoring and evaluation of the activities and efforts towards the CHEA. The implementation strategy is based on the IUCEA Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and the activities that have been planned therein.

In the development of this implementation strategy and roadmap, so many individuals & stakeholders made invaluable contributions. I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the Commissions and Councils for Higher Education from the Partner States and the Standing Committee on Common Higher Education Area for supporting the process.

I wish also to extend my gratitude to Prof. Michael Mawa (Chief Principal Quality Assurance & Qualifications Framework Officers), Prof. Alexis Ndabarushimana (Senior Quality Assurance & Standards Officer), Dr. Robert Ayine (Senior Qualifications Framework Officer) and Mr. Dickson Wanglobo (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer ACE II Project) of IUCEA for invaluable contribution and input in the process.

Am confident that this roadmap will help move faster the convergence of our process towards the realization of an East African Common Higher Education Area. I now have the honour to present to you the stakeholders the implementation strategy and roadmap for East African Common Higher Education Area.



**Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona,**  
**Executive Secretary**

Kampala, July 2022 IUCEA



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Declaration of EACHEA

On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017, the Summit of the East African Heads of State declared the East African Community (EAC), declared EAC a Common Higher Education Area (CHEA). The CHEA is aimed at harmonizing higher education and training systems in EAC, to facilitate and enable the mobility of students and teachers and promote free movement of labour, people, and services as envisioned under the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC (1999) and the Common Market Protocol (2010).

To achieve the common higher education area, the Summit entrusted the Council of Ministers to coordinate its operationalization; and the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) to offer technical support in:

1. Creating a common frame of references (frameworks) to facilitate comparability, compatibility and mutual recognition of higher education and training systems and the qualifications attained within the EAC Partner States, based on shared views on quality, criteria, standards and learning outcomes.
2. Operationalizing the regional frameworks that is; develop and present the implementation arrangements or strategies and road maps to Partner States for adoption and agree on national road maps (or ToRs), oversee implementation of the approved strategies and issue annual stock-taking report.

**COMMON MARKET PROTOCOL: FREE MOVEMENT OF LABOUR, PEOPLE, AND SERVICES**  
**Improved Cross-Border Mobility Of Students And Teachers**

*An East Africa where citizens freely move, study and work in any preferred member state.*

More harmonized higher education and training systems

Enhanced stakeholders' understanding of the benefits of CHEA.



**COMMON FRAMEWORKS DEVELOPED AND ADOPTED**

**STAKEHOLDERS' COMMITMENTS ENHANCED**

- Compatible national qualification frameworks.
- Shared quality assurance standards and practices.
- Common credit systems.
- Common approach to recognition of qualifications.
- Common academic calendar (years and semesters).
- Uniform fees for ALL East Africans.

- Compliance to requirements of CHEA.
- Partner States and HEIs.
- Commitments to funding.
- Demonstrable progress.
- Barriers to mobility removed.
- Policy reforms as applicable.

**1.2 Decision of the Sectoral Council**

At its 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting held in Dar-es-Salaam from 31<sup>st</sup> May to 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021, the Sectoral Council on Education, Science and Technology, Culture and Sports received a report on the progress made towards the operationalization of the EACHEA from IUCEA.

Following the receipt of the report, the Sectoral Council directed that IUCEA should:

- a. Speed up the operationalization of EACHEA;
- b. Prepare a road map and/or implementation strategies towards a CHEA to be presented at the next meeting (17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sectoral Council on Education, Science and Technology, Culture and Sports).

## 2.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EACHEA

IUCEA took note of the Sectoral Council directive and prepared an implementation plan herein elaborated.

In response, the road map and implementation strategies towards a Common Higher Education in East Africa are enumerated below.

### 2.1 Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy for EACHEA is based on the IUCEA strategic Plan 2021-2025 and the activities that have been planned within it. Broadly, by June 2025, IUCEA envisages an East Africa with a more harmonized higher education systems; and with stakeholders who understand and appreciate the benefits and opportunities that EACHEA creates.

IUCEA will focus on the following strategic areas: -

- a. Enhancing stakeholders' understanding of the benefits and opportunities.
- b. Ensuring compliance to the requirements for implementation of East African Common Higher Education Area
- c. Strengthening cooperation and transparency in Quality Assurance practices.
- d. Development of comparable National qualifications frameworks in line with (EAQFHE.) East African Qualifications Framework For Higher Education
- e. Enhancing involvement of (TVET) Technical and Vocational Education Training in the CHEA process.
- f. Promote mobility of students and staff.
- g. Strengthening university-industry linkages.

### 2.1.1 Implementation Arrangements.

**Governance.** The regional committee for CHEA, IUCEA, and Partner States (Councils and/or Commissions for Higher Education (HE), and Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) will be directly involved in the implementation, supervision, and monitoring and evaluation of the initiative.

- a. **Regional Committee on EACHEA** will provide the overall guidance and oversight towards a Common Higher Education Space in EAC. Specifically, will ensure common frameworks are developed and operationalized.
- b. **IUCEA** will coordinate, facilitate, and oversee the implementation and offer capacity building support to Partner States and HEIs. Collect and aggregate reports from National Council/ Commission for Higher Education, compile a regional report and present it to stakeholders at an annual event.
- c. **Partner States** Through the relevant ministries Departments and Agencies offer implementation support and supervision of the initiative at national level, to put in place a National Steering Committee (NSC). In consultation with other national stakeholders, prepare national road map. Also, Partner states will take stock of progress and submit annual reports to IUCEA as at end of June every year.
- d. **Higher Educational Institutions** principally responsible for the implementation of higher education reforms with oversight from Councils and Commissions for Higher Education.
- e. **Funding.** IUCEA will budget and fund regional level activities.

## 2.2 Implementation Roadmap

### ROAD MAP TOWARDS OPERATIONALIZING THE EAC- CHEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
<b>1</b>	<b>IMPROVED STAKEHOLDERS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE BENEFITS THAT CHEA CREATES.</b>			
<b>1.1</b>	<b><i>Communication and Advocacy plan for Common Higher Education Area (CHEA).</i></b>			
1.1.1	Revise the IUCEA communications strategy to include aspects of CHEA.	Nov 2023	Communication strategy developed.	IUCEA
1.1.2	Develop and disseminate knowledge products.	Dec 2023	Knowledge products developed and disseminated. Stakeholders' awareness of the benefits and opportunities that CHEA creates is enhanced.	IUCEA
<b>1.2</b>	<b><i>Compliance to requirements for implementation of CHEA.</i></b>			

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS ECHEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
1.2.1	Develop regional compliance framework (RCF), to support the implementation of the common higher education standards.	Sept 2023	<p>Regional compliance framework for CHEA developed, and approval obtained.</p> <p>RCF in-use to support the implementation of the common higher education standards.</p> <p>Key compliance parameters agreed upon (nationally and HEIs levels). A matrix tracking compliance to regional standards by Partner States and HEIs maintained.</p>	<p>IUCEA &amp; Partner States</p> <p>National Councils / Commission for Higher Education.</p> <p>IUCEA &amp; Partner States</p>
1.2.2	Develop and disseminate guidelines for operationalizing regional standards.	Sept 2023	A guide on the common higher education for Partner States and HEIs developed and disseminated.	<p>IUCEA &amp; National Councils / Commission for Higher Education.</p> <p>Partner States</p>

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
			Clarifying key agreements, dispelling myths surrounding the CHEA and indicating sources of further information.	IUCEA.
<b>2</b>	<b>HARMONIZED HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS</b>			
<b>2.1</b>	<b><i>Shared Quality Assurance Standards and Practices</i></b>			
2.1.1	Obtain progress reports on the adoption of regional quality assurance standards (nationally and by HEIs) from Councils and Commissions for higher education in Partner States.	June 2024	<p>Reports from Partner States collected and analyzed, and the regional report compiled; demonstrating progress, and identifying major issues to be addressed.</p> <p>Compiled regional report disseminated to stakeholders.</p> <p>Procedures for analyzing progress agreed upon (the Bologna scorecard approach adopted).</p>	<p>IUCEA &amp; National Councils / Commission for Higher Education. Partner States IUCEA.</p> <p>IUCEA.</p> <p>National Councils / Commission for Higher Education. Partner States.</p>

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EACHEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
			By 2024, regional QA standards and guidelines are fully operationalized by Partner States.	IUCEA
2.1.2	Hold annual Quality Assurance dialogue with stakeholders.	August 2022	Stakeholders aware of the quality issues to be addressed and use of QA standards and guidelines.	IUCEA
2.1.3	Hold advocacy meeting with officials from the Councils and Commissions for higher education (from 7 Partner States) on the development of competency-based curricula in HEIs.	April 2023	<p>Advocacy meeting to agree on benchmarks for competency-based curricula held.</p> <p>By 2024, competency-based EAC curricula developed and included as requirements for program development by Partner States.</p>	<p>IUCEA</p> <p>National Councils / Commission for Higher Education. Partner States</p>



S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
			Key parameters to measure and report progress agreed upon. Annual national progress report from Partner States collected and analyzed, and the regional progress compiled.	IUCEA
2.1.4	Holds annual forum for Heads of Commission, and Councils for Higher Education ( for 7 partner states) on Areas of common interest but not limited to regulations, Quality Assurance and realization of common Higher Education	June 2026	Harmonized regulatory system,Common understanding of processes i.e Licencing, quality assurance audits etc in partnership states and mutual recognition and equating of qualification to facilitate mobility of students,Staff and skills	IUCEA, Commissions and Councils for Higher Education  IUCEA/ Partner States
2.1.5	Develop QA guidelines for Open, Distance and eLearning in higher education	October 2023	QA Guidelines for Open, Distance and	IUCEA

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EACHEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
2.1.6	Develop M&E guidelines for Quality Assurance in higher education.	April 2024	M&E guidelines for QA developed and approved. Quality and capacity indicators for institutional improvement compiled (assessing the capacity and quality of higher education offered).	IUCEA
<b>2.2</b>	<b><i>Compatible national qualification frameworks.</i></b>			
2.2.1	Obtain reports from Partner States on progress made so far in developing and/or revising NQFs to conform to requirements of the EAQFHE.	June 2024	Reports from Partner States collected and analyzed, and the regional report compiled; demonstrating progress, and identifying major issues to be addressed	IUCEA/Partner States
			Compiled regional report disseminated to stakeholders.  By 2024, National Qualifications Frameworks are revised and conform to the requirements of the EAQFHE by Partner States.	

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
2.2.2	Sensitize stakeholders on EAQFHE.	Aug 2024	Stakeholders' awareness and knowledge of the functions of EAQFHE in the reform process enhanced.  Stakeholders include university leaders, student organizations, Ministries, and other authorities responsible for higher education.	IUCEA
2.2.3	Orient academic registrars on EAQFHE.	Sept 2023	Academic registrars of public (or member) universities are technically aware and knowledgeable of the EAQFHE.	IUCEA
2.2.4	Develop policies (3) to operationalize EAQFHE.	October 2024	Three (3) policies developed, and approval obtained.  By 2025, policies are ready including policy to operationalize the regional credit accumulation and transfer system.	IUCEA

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EACHEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
2.2.5	Develop and maintain Qualifications Register (QR).	Oct 2024	QR disseminated and available to East Africans (English and French versions), being used to facilitate mobility of students	IUCEA
<b>2.3</b>	<b><i>Involve TVET in the CHEA processes</i></b>			
2.3.1	Hold advocacy meetings with TVET regulators/ authorities to enhance their involvement in the CHEA process.	April 2023	TVET stakeholders understand the CHEA process and appreciate the benefits and opportunities that it creates.	IUCEA/ MoE in Partner States
2.3.2	Develop the vocational education and training standards for East Africa.	June 2023	Vocational education and training standards for EAC developed, approval obtained and disseminated.	IUCEA/ MoE in Partner States
2.3.3	Develop and obtain approval for EAC TVET Qualifications framework and occupational standards.	October 2023	Regional TVET Qualifications framework and Occupation Standards developed, and approval obtained.	IUCEA/MoE in Partner States

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
<b>2.4</b>	<b><i>Promote students and staff mobility programmes.</i></b>			
2.4.1	Engage 50 member universities to institutionalize staff mobility program.	October 2023	Met with member universities to advocate for institutionalizing staff mobility program.  By 2024, staff mobility programs institutionalized by 50 member universities.	IUCEA
2.4.2	Support at least 50 staff of member universities to participate in the annual exchange.	October 2023	Annually, 50 staff of member universities supported to participate exchange program by IUCEA.	IUCEA
2.4.3	Support at least 100 postgraduate students to study within EAC every year.	October 2024	Annually, at least 100 postgraduate students supported to study within EAC.	IUCEA

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EACHEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
2.4.4	Mobilize scholarship funding for 50 higher education students from disadvantaged or marginalized communities every year.	October 2024	Annually, scholarship funding for 50 HE students from disadvantaged communities mobilized by IUCEA.	IUCEA
2.4.5	Support 50 students with funding under IUCEA donor projects in international mobility program every year.	Sept 2024	Annually, 50 students supported under IUCEA donor funded projects in international mobility.	IUCEA
2.4.6	Mobilize scholarship funding for 50 refugees and/ or IDPs students every year.	Sept 2024	Annually, scholarship funding for 50 refugees and/ or IDPs students mobilized by IUCEA.	IUCEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
2.4.7	Develop and rollout regional internship programs for university and TVET students.	October 2024	Guidelines for regional internship programs developed, approval obtained and published on IUCEA website.  By end of 2023, first cohort of 50 interns are recruited and deployed within EAC.	IUCEA/ Member Universities
2.4.8	Advocate for the implementation of the harmonized tuition fees structure i.e., East African, and domestic students pay same amount of tuition fees.	October 2023	Met with member universities to advocate for harmonized tuition fee's structure.  By 2024, both East African and domestic students pay same amount of tuition fees in IUCEA member universities.	IUCEA/MEAC/ MoE in Partner States

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EACHEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
2.4.9	Support 300 students with funding under IUCEA donor projects in regional mobility program every year.	October 2024	Annually, 300 students supported under IUCEA donor funded projects in regional mobility.	IUCEA
2.4.10	Support 10 staff of member universities to participate in the annual global exchange.	Nov 2022	Annually, 10 staff of member universities supported to participate global exchange program by IUCEA.	IUCEA
2.4.11	Support the development of management information systems for universities through technical mobility.	February 2023	Management information systems for 30 member universities developed and in-use.	IUCEA/ Member Universities.



S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
2.4.12	Advocate for EAC student mobility scholarship scheme with member universities.	Sept 2022	Met with 20 member universities to advocate for the EAC student mobility scholarship scheme.  By Sept 2022, the EAC student mobility scholarship scheme is operational, and 20 member universities committed to it.	IUCEA & member universities
<b>2.5</b>	<b><i>University-industry linkages strengthened</i></b>			
2.5.1	Advocate for establishment of university-public-private sector engagement network to promote collaboration between the sectors.	Dec 2022	University-public-private sector engagement network established	IUCEA

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EACHEA

S/N	Task / Key Activities	Planned Completion Date	Expected results	Responsibility
2.5.2	Organize academia-Public-Private partnership forums or exhibitions to explore the status and potential for linkage between the three sectors	Dec 2022	Annual Academia-Public-Private forums and/or exhibitions organized.	IUCEA

### 3.0 RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The results framework will be used to measure progress towards a common higher education in East Africa. This will be updated and shared annually with stakeholders. The results framework is derived from IUCEA Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Strategic Objectives	Desired results	Performance indicators
<b>SO1:</b> Advocate for and foster the implementation of the EAC CHEA	Enhanced stakeholders' understanding and knowledge of the EAC-CHEA.	Level of stakeholders' understanding and knowledge of EAC-CHEA, benefits and opportunities that it creates.
	Improved cross-border or mutual recognition of qualifications across EAC.	EAC partner states with easily readable and comparable qualifications which conforms to the EAQFHE.
		Extent of adoption of the Regional Quality Assurance (QA) framework across EAC, share of HEIs subjected to regular external QA.
		HEIs with recognizable quality assurance systems (%).
		HEIs issuing certification documentation to graduates of EAQFHE qualifications.
<b>SO5:</b> Enhance universities' capacity for regional research and innovation in collaboration	Industry-academia research collaboration strengthened.	MoUs for collaborative research between HEI and industry signed.
		Number of incubation centres established.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP TOWARDS EACHEA

Strategic Objectives	Desired results	Performance indicators
with stakeholders for knowledge generation and product/policy innovation.		Average value (USD) of HEI applied research funded by industry or joint applied research undertaken (contracts with industry).
	Improved translation of research initiatives into commercial products or innovations	Percent of research results transformed into industrial processes or marketable products.

<b>STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EACHEA FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Role Of The Stakeholders</b>
Council of Ministers (comprises ministers responsible for EAC affairs in Partner States) / Ministries Responsible for EAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy guidance</li> <li>• Approvals of CHEA framework and instruments</li> <li>• Coordinating operationalization of EACHEA</li> </ul>
Government Ministries, Departments and Directorates (Education, Internal Affairs, Migration, Justice, Foreign Affairs, East African Community Affairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving policy guidance and direction on implementation of EACHEA</li> <li>• Issuing student passes</li> <li>• Issuance of visas, temporary passes, work permits and enforcement of Immigration law</li> </ul>
National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiating policy reforms and directives for successful implementation of common higher education area.</li> <li>• Monitoring compliance on implementation of EACHEA</li> <li>• Accreditation and mutual recognition of qualifications.</li> </ul>
IUCEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the necessary technical support in EACHEA</li> <li>• Prepare the necessary tools and documentation for realization of EACHEA.</li> <li>• Monitor the implementation of activities towards CHEA</li> </ul>
Universities and Higher Education Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement policy requirements and directives on admissions standards, curricula, and assessments.</li> <li>• Provide regular reports on status of harmonization of education.</li> <li>• Develop programmes for accreditation</li> </ul>
Professional associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional codes of conducts</li> <li>• Removal of impediments on professional practice across the region</li> <li>• Support in accreditation</li> </ul>

## **STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EACHEA FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Role Of The Stakeholders</b>
Students and professional graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrol for studies in the EAC region.</li> <li>• Provide feedback on experiences in the implementation of the EACHEA</li> </ul>
Parents and guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Influencers and financiers of students and young professionals</li> </ul>
Civil society and student groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold governments to account regarding successful implementation of EACHEA.</li> <li>• Opinion formers in shaping the public narrative regarding EACHEA</li> </ul>
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for full implementation of EACHEA</li> <li>• Partner with universities and tertiary institutions in producing quality graduates ready for the job market.</li> </ul>
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the monitoring of the implementation of the framework through feedbacks mechanism</li> <li>• Create enabling environment for free movement of students and professionals, and right of establishment in the EAC region.</li> </ul>





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