

Higher education's contribution to the AfCFTA can be well illustrated through numerous European Union programs and funding strands that prioritize and incentivize African continental integration. This ranges from Intra-Africa/Europe university cooperation projects to mechanisms for staff and student mobility, to more structural investments in frameworks that facilitate recognition of studies and qualifications across borders. Such initiatives not only enhance academic collaboration but also build the human capital necessary for a thriving single market. By strengthening networks of knowledge and innovation across Africa, higher education becomes a critical driver of economic development and regional cohesion. Below are several examples of such projects which demonstrate their impact and relevance.

- **Erasmus+** capacity building projects aim to strengthen the quality and relevance of education, training, and youth systems in partner countries outside the EU. They support institutional development, innovation, and the exchange of best practices through international cooperation between educational institutions, public bodies, and civil society. These initiatives help build sustainable partnerships, improve governance, and enhance skills and employability.

The following are examples of projects that directly or indirectly support the realization of AfCFTA. This can be through generating mechanisms for recognition of studies and professional qualifications between countries and systems, through the generation of joint and collaborative study programs, and through university-industry cooperation for employability in strategic sectors:

- **University-industry co-creation to build Entrepreneurial Universities in the Southern African Development Community (UNIICo-create)**
(<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43353764/101179301>)
- **Joint QA Africa « Renforcer les mécanismes nationaux et régional d'assurance qualité par un processus conjoint d'évaluation et d'accréditation »:**
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43353764/101083175/ERASMUS2027?order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=10&sortBy=es_SortDate&keywords=joint%20qa&isExactMatch=false
- **« Capacitation pour l'évaluation et assurance qualité des formations doctorales et de la recherche » (QADoc) :** https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43353764/101128774/ERASMUS2027?order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=es_SortDate&keywords=qadoc&isExactMatch=false
- **“Advancing Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship through Postgraduate Education in East Africa” (ADVANCE)** https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43353764/101178404/ERASMUS2027?order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=es_SortDate&keywords=africa%20economy%20education&isExactMatch=false

- The **Intra-Africa Mobility Scheme** supports student and staff exchanges between African higher education institutions to strengthen academic cooperation and build regional networks. It aims to enhance skills development, increase access to quality education, and promote harmonization of programs and qualifications across the continent.

Examples of projects in key sectors:

Agri-food:

- Partnership to Strengthen Graduate Training and Research Capacity for Developing Climate Smart Agrifood Systems in Central and East Africa (CSAS) - <https://c-sas.org/advert.html>
- Mobility for Plant Genomics Scholars to Accelerate ClimateSmart Adaptation Options and Food Security in Africa II (GENES II) : <https://genes-intra-africa.org/>
- Capacity Building of African Young Scientists in Precision Agriculture Through Cross-Regional Academic Mobility for Enhanced ClimateSmart Agri-Food Systems (PATH) - <https://gbios-uac.org/project-charter/>

Climate:

- Grow Green Africa (Gr2A): Building Climate Change Resilience Through Smart Green Technologies - <https://gr2a.org/>
 - Promoting Inclusive Homegrown Clean Energy Solutions for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Africa (HCE Solutions) - <https://hcesolutions.org/>
 - Mobility in Innovative Green Technologies for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Bioeconomy (INTERACT-Africa) - <https://interactafrica.mu.ac.ke/>
- The **HAQAA3** (Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation) Initiative, funded by the Global Gateway strategy of the European Commission in partnership with the African Union, aims to provide African countries with the skilled workers, managers and administrators they need to foster sustainable development and encourage the trade and investment as well as to enhance citizenship and democratic values. HAQAA3n promotes African continental standards for quality assurance and accreditation higher education study programs and degrees, builds trust between quality assurance agencies and qualifications authorities and promotes Africa recognition tools to foster mobility.

<https://haqaa3.obreal.org/>

- The **African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQFII)**, also part of the EU's Global Gateway, is a strategic initiative aimed at harmonizing frameworks for qualifications across African countries to support mobility, recognition of skills, and lifelong learning. It builds on

the original ACQFI and enters a new phase to deepen implementation and capacity building among member states. The framework promotes mutual trust and transparency between national qualification systems, aligning with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy. By improving comparability and standardization, ACQFI plays a crucial role in advancing education, employability, and regional integration across the continent. - <https://acqf.africa/>

- **Team Europe Initiatives** are collaborative efforts by the European Union, its Member States, and development institutions to support global partnerships and advance shared priorities such as sustainable development, climate resilience, digital innovation, and health. By pooling resources and expertise, these initiatives aim to deliver more coherent, strategic, and impactful support in partner countries around the world.

Team Europe Initiatives and Joint Programming Tracker:

https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/resources/team-europe-tracker_en

- [Support to the African Continental Free Trade Area](#)
- [Opportunity-driven Skills and VET in Africa \(OP-VET\)](#)
- Team Europe Technical Assistance Facility to support the AfCFTA and Continental Economic Integration - https://www.fiap.gob.es/en/proyectos_fiiapp/te-taf-para-apoyar-el-afcfta-y-la-integracion-economica-continental-africana/