



Third (3rd) ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP CONFERENCE ON AfCFTA

📅 **13th-15th September 2024**

📍 **MARRIOTT HOTEL, KIGALI, RWANDA**

THEME: Bridging Barriers to Cross-Regional Trade and Technological Development Synergies in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area

The University of Rwanda (in Association with the UNISA SBL and the University of Botswana) is hosting the **3rd International Engaged Scholarship Conference**, focusing on Bridging Barriers to Cross-Regional Trade and Technological Development Synergies in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Call for Abstracts

Abstracts are invited (as of 01 March to 05 August 2024) on each of the 6 conference thematic areas:

- Intra-Africa Trade
- Agenda 2063 Implications for national and regional policies
- Entrepreneurship, Small Business and the Informal Sector
- Exporting Internationalization and foreign direct investments
- Cultural diversity, Human Resources and Logistics/Supply Chain and Organization
- Technology Infrastructure, Innovations, Tools, Systems & Enablers

Abstract are submitted on a separate link:

- Submit an Abstract here: <https://iesca.co.za/about-application>
- Registration: You have to register to submit your abstract (same link above)
- Full Paper Submission: 01 March - 20 August'24
- Notification of Acceptance +Peer Review Guidelines: 30 August'24
- Conference Programme Finalization / Publication: 10 September'24

Upon a positive evaluation of your abstract, a conference paper will be invited for submission by no later than 05 August 2024, to a double-blind peer review process.

Submission Link https://www.scienceopen.com/collection/SBL_UNISA_Conference

Registration Link <https://www.scienceopen.com/register>

All accepted conference papers will be published in electronic conference proceedings (with an ISBN number, as indexed by



... where outstanding *quality papers will be invited into book chapters of a conference manuscript.*

About the Conference:

This conference is a platform for policy makers, revolutionary academics, agents of change, and indigenous knowledge holders to contribute their intellectual prowess towards creating collaborative opportunities between the public and private sector; between urban and rural businesses; between local, national and regional enterprises, to create sustainable economies. The aim of the conference is to enlist the voices of policy makers, local, regional and global enterprises to contribute their perspectives on poverty eradication solutions in the context of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement. The conference seeks to spotlight systems for coproducing knowledge in ways that navigate policy, science and indigenous knowledge to advance poverty eradication agendas of African communities.

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Themes and parallel sessions

TRACK 1: Intra-Africa Trade Status

Harmonization of the continental free trade market for African countries is a significant development towards a greater African unity.

- Alignment of financial systems and the easing of potential barriers would go a long way in facilitating this process.
- A discourse on national and regional financial (including Fiscal and monetary) frameworks, multi-lateral diplomatic arrangements on trade between countries, currencies, taxing systems as well as banking and investment regimes would play a key role in facilitating trans-border, trans-regional, and ultimately, intra-continental trade.
- A Borderless Africa: Implications for rural-urban economic spaces
- Challenges in implementing the AfCFTA

AfCFTA offers a scholarship platform for contributions to this intra-continental free-trade harmonization endeavor.

Papers (and Abstracts): Novel Research contributions are invited finance, currencies, banking, and investment topics to help Africa shape its common-market harmonization endeavor.

TRACK 2: Agenda 2063 and implications for national and regional policies

- Prior to Africa Free Trade markets harmonization undertaking, economic policies and strategies were nationally and regionally focused. A harmonization discourse would help forge a new chapter in the Africa-Free-Trade market development.
- Protocol on Trade in Services: Implications for Higher Education

AfCFTA offers a scholarship platform for contributions towards this intra-continental free-trade harmonization endeavor.

Papers (and Abstracts): Novel Research contributions are invited on economic policies, strategies and related topics - to help Africa shape its common-market harmonization endeavor

TRACK 3: Entrepreneurship, Small Business and the Informal Sector

- The opening of Africa continental trading markets is geared to advance economic prospects of the continent, and all its people.
- Entrepreneurship development, including the strengthening of small, micro and medium enterprises (within the formal and informal sector) is central to this effort.
- Rules of Origin: implications for African Enterprises and the Rest of the World
- Protocol on Competition Policy: Implications for small business & informal sector
- Protocol on Trade in goods: Implications for small business & informal sector
- Protocol on Trade in Services: Implications for small business & informal sector

Papers (and Abstracts): Novel Research contributions are invited on how respective nation states, regional economic formations, and the greater continental economic development initiative can better enable the small, micro and medium entrepreneurs to access, contribute to, and benefit from the new Africa Free-Trade market development

TRACK 4: Exporting, Internationalization and Foreign Direct Investment

- Through a Free-Trade Market liberalization undertaking, Africa seeks to advance its continental economic competitive standing in the greater global political economy.
- International Trade Theory
- EU intra-regional Trade Lessons for Africa
- Peace and Security issues in Africa – implications international trade

Papers (and Abstracts):

Novel Research contributions are invited on how provincial bodies, nation states and respective regional collaborative formations can align their internationalization regimes, including multilateral trade frameworks to better exploit the current Africa Free-market trading developments

TRACK 5: Cultural diversity, Human Resources and Logistics/Supply Chain and Organization

- The opening of the Africa Trading Markets have direct implications on the movement of labour between respective African countries, with direct implications on cultural diversity, respective national human resource frameworks and related practices.
- Operations, supply chain and project management processes also need to align to continental market extensions
- Cultural Diversity, human movement, operations & logistics – Implications on trade

Papers (and Abstracts):

Novel Research contributions are invited on how provincial bodies and nation states, respective regional collaborative formations and the greater continental economic governance structure can align their Human-Resources, Operations and Logistics - including Supply Chain and Project Management regimes can be aligned for the new intra-continental free-trade market environment.

TRACK 6: Technology Infrastructure, Innovations, Tools, Systems & Enablers

- Information and Communication Technology is at the center of all modern economic activity, be it e-Business, e-Commerce, e-Marketing, or purely just efficient communication, training or trading at a stock exchange anywhere in the continent and the world.
- Harmonizing technology infrastructure, networks and systems, as well as technology resources to simplify trade would help improve intra-Africa trade efforts.
- Digital Transformation: Implications on intra-Africa Trade

Papers (and Abstracts):

Novel Research contributions are invited on advancing national, regional and trans-Africa technology infrastructure, systems, tools, networks and practices – including technology literacies, in order to capacitate efficiency and trade competitiveness in the Africa Free-Trade market

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Abstracts format

Title of Paper

Author's Name(s) (Full Name(s))

Affiliation/University/ Institute

e-mail address

ABSTRACT

An abstract should be a single paragraph, with no indentation. It should summarize key points of the manuscript in 200 to 350 words. Hence, standard practice have seen abstracts being spared citations, references, figures, tables and graphs. For, abstracts should capture only the essence of the manuscript, including a few lines of introduction, linked to a shortened problematic and a rationale. Whilst titles should give a clear link between the proposed manuscript and the conference, the framing of the abstract must also show a link between the proposed manuscript and the theme of the conference. The aim and objective would follow logically, leading to a methodology. An expected contribution also balances the context (in place of the findings). Linking this to the actual aim and purpose of the conference or journal would improve the relevance (and acceptability) of the abstract. Obviously, if the manuscript is based on the work that already has the findings, the abstract becomes even more balanced. Indeed, abstracts should also end with a logically flowing conclusion.

***Provide 5 key words in alphabetical order separated with semicolons, not included in the title.**

Keywords: writing; template; sixth; edition; self-discipline

Call for Papers

We invite original, high-quality papers of unpublished conceptual, constructive, experimental and/ or theoretical research in topical areas across the four thematic areas of the conference.

NB: Authors undertake NOT to submit the same manuscripts for publication or similar consideration in other publication platforms. Submission of a manuscripts implies that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Full Paper Reviewing Process

- All manuscript submissions will be subjected to a double-blind peer-review process, guided by strict scientific criteria of academic excellence, integrity and novelty.
- The submitting author is responsible for ensuring that the article's publication has been approved by all co-authors, taking responsibility for the quality of the submission from the peer review to the presentation, and ultimately, the publication process.
- The publisher will not be held legally responsible should there be any claims for compensation.

Language

- English, American, British, South Africa usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these.
- Authors are encouraged to use relevant editing services and tools to improve the quality of manuscripts, thereby improving chances for acceleration into the Journal of Public Administration (JoPA) Special Issue.

Images, Figures, Tables

Standard international formatting practice in the use of Tables, Figures or images applies.

Tables

The Heading of the Table is placed above the Table. The Title of Figures is always placed below the figure as demonstrated below.

Table 1: Formatting Template for Tables

International Engaged Scholarship Series				
Country & Venue	1st IESC'22 - Jhb, RSA	2nd IESC'23 - UB, Gaborone	3 rd IESC'24 – UNI-Rwanda,	4th IESC'25 - UNAM, Windhoek
Theme	AfCTA	AfCTA & Paf (e-Nets)	Cross-Regional Trade & Tech-Dev Synergies	Technology Status & Trade Beyond 2030

International Engaged Scholarship Conference (IESC); University of Rwanda; Pan African e-Networks [PAf (e-Nets)]

Source: Mlitwa, 2022

To demonstrate the use of figures, we use an image from the 1st International Engaged Scholarship Conference'22, that highlights the essence of the co-creation spirit. The essence of collaborative linkages in activities in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Essence of the Co-creation Concept in Developments

Source: SBL, 1st IESC'22 Brochure

Finally, Tables, figures and images sourced from alternative publications should be acknowledged with appropriate references.

Paper Structure

- Title
- Author details (and affiliation)
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Problemata
- Aim/Purpose/Objectives
- Methodology/Approach
- Findings/Results
- Conclusion/Implications/Recommendations
- Acknowledgements (when appropriate)
- References
- Appendices (when appropriate)

File format: MS Word-compatible file

Formatting & Paper Length Limit

Paper length	Full paper: within 15 pages, including references, tables/ charts and keywords
Abstract length	200-350 words
Key words	3-5 words
Font	12-point Times New Roman
Paragraph	Single-spaced
Margin	Normal (Top :2.54 cm , Bottom: 2.54 cm; Left : 3.18cm , Right: 3.18cm)
Page numbers	Bottom-centered
Layout	One-column Portrait
Format	MS Word-compatible file

Though not compulsory, attending authors are encouraged to also prepare and present posters in the conference venue, to supplement their research presentations

Poster Format

A poster is a graphical illustration of your research project, article message or idea. As such, a poster should be based on the submitted abstract as accepted by the Scientific Committee. It must be a format that is easy to follow, read and comprehend with minimal effort.

Mostly through inclusion of some of visuals, charts and or graphs - joined by fewer words. As a basis, a Poster must have a title that is bold and representative of the message of the poster. Usually on top of the poster, together with the names and affiliations of the authors, in a font lower than that of the title. The colours of the text and images must always be in direct contrast to the background, to enhance visibility. Size: A1 international paper size, on a board or material that allows it to be posted on the boards.

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Background and Purpose Statement

Today's world is an interdependent trade ecosystem. The recent signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (2018) underpins the commitment of the African leaders to operationalise the interdependence of economies in the African region. Even more important, is the prevailing mood amongst African leaders to fast-track industrial development and regional integration. On 1 January 2021, trading under AfCFTA started. The AfCFTA with its 35 signatories, is an instrument that legitimises the creation of a single continental market for goods and services – with free movement of business, people and investments – laying – the foundations for the integrated, prosperous and inclusive Africa. One of the expected outcomes through the implementation of the agreement is to boost intra-African trade. Currently, intra-African trade accounts for between 10-16%. It is expected that the agreement will accelerate growth and sustainable development through a doubling of overall intra-African trade by 2022, and tripling trade in agricultural goods by 2023.

Trade interdependences pose challenges for policy makers and opportunities for local and cross-border traders. Challenges abound when economic policies do not create an enabling environment for local and international trade to be optimized. Forward-looking trade policy frameworks are crucial in international trade; but these are not enough to transform and align African economies with the needs of the current digital industrial revolution. Without a special kind of policy making acumen and leadership sensibilities, that unlock capabilities to navigate the global business environment nimbly, the policy environment will still not yield inclusive growth.

Notwithstanding collapsing of borders as envisaged in the AfCFTA, trade deficit in Africa is high, while intra-Africa Trade is low. This is attributed to several factors including changes in the structure of the African economies that saw unrelenting unemployment figures in the past ten years, decline in the productive sector of the African economies, while inequality increased in some countries.

The effects of the financial crisis of Covid 19 and the Ukrainian War, as well and the increase in indebtedness of households aggravates growth problems faced by small, medium and large enterprises. These economic conditions require the private and public sector to swivel around in search for growth opportunities, often, in uncharted waters of international trade.

Accordingly, the questions that will drive chapters invited for this publication will be contextualized around the unique geopolitical and economic circumstances of Countries in Africa. Some of these questions are: how can small, medium and large business unlock value against the low growth-trap, high inequality, and the speed of technological and market changes? What will it take to erase the legacy policy choices from the consciousness and soul of local businesses, and institutionalize the AfCFTA to invigorate the African economies? What kind of international trade opportunities are available and how can local business better prepare for such opportunities? Given, trade facilitation problems, infrastructure deficit, as well as peace and security issues in Africa how can the public and private sector institutionalize the AfCFTA in a way that would pivot Africa on a new inclusive growth path

Paper Contributions

With the support of the University of Rwanda (UR), University of Botswana (UB) and University of South Africa (Unisa SBL), we are pleased to invite proposals for chapters of previously unpublished and original work to be included in **Dismantling Barriers to Cross-Regional Trade & Tech-Dev Synergies in the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement** to be published by a high impact Scopus publisher in 2024.

Paper contributions to reflect topics emergent from the conference theme and tracks, as would be determined by the edit team

Submission Procedure

- 1) Book chapter proposals with a deep theoretical analysis focused international trade theory and its implications to different industrial and higher education sectors
- 2) You are invited to submit a word document with the title of the proposal and an abstract of 500 - 600 words. In addition, please submit a 200-word author(s) bio which should include: author's or authors' professional title(s), affiliation(s), and contact details.
- 3) The abstract should present a strong proposal that describes the subject of the study, and both a clear methodological and theoretical approach based on specific arguments to support the proposal. Include specific details and primary sources that explain how the proposal challenges or updates existing research.
- 4) Submit abstracts to: The Scientific Committee Chair, Using the Abstract Submission
- 5) The deadline for submission of completed papers of up to 6000 words is 05 August 2024.

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