



EAC

EAC: Introduction

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Chart 1: Political map of EAC

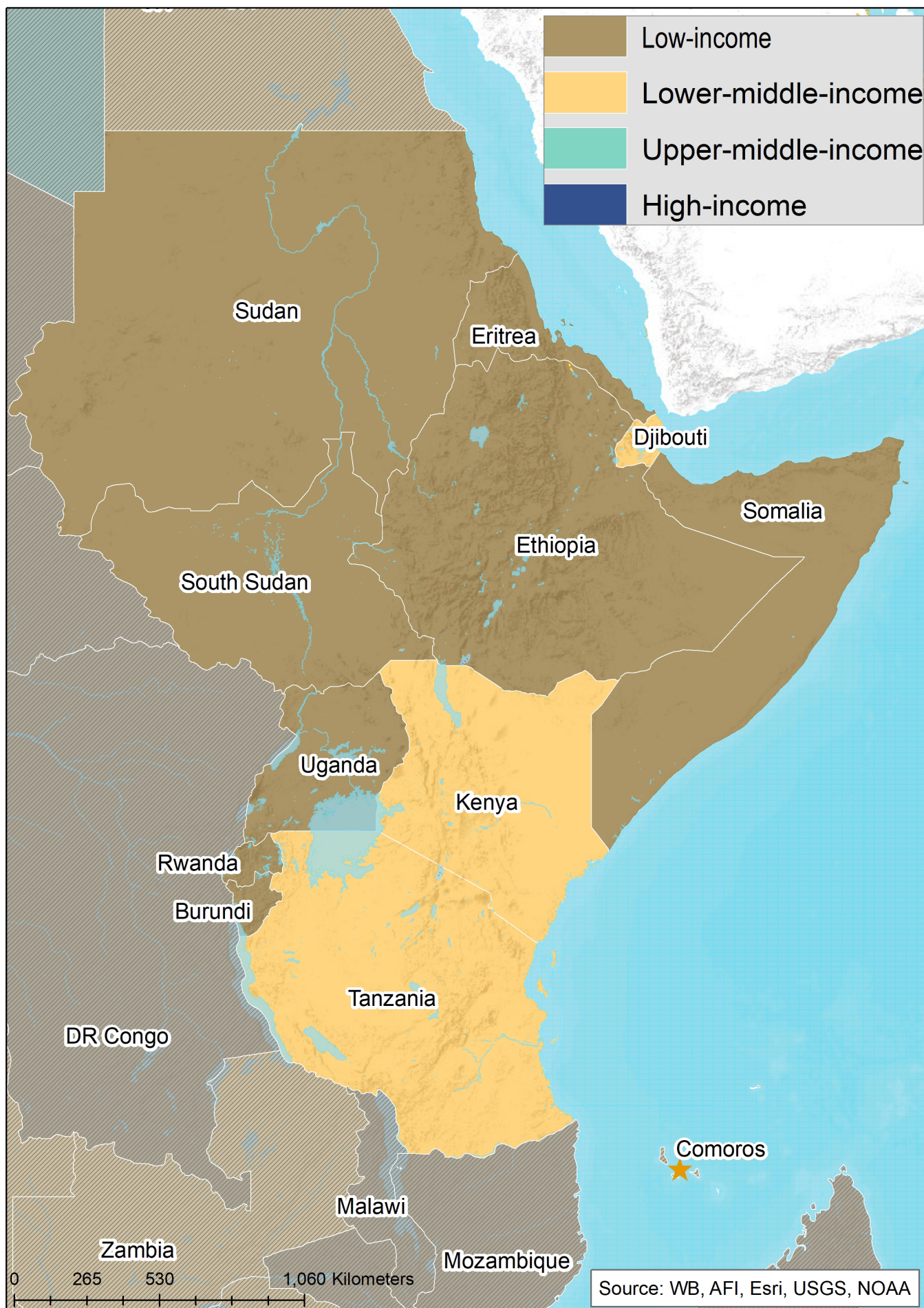


Chart 1 is a political map of the EAC.

The East African Community (EAC) is one of the regional economic community recognised by the African Union comprising eight member states: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The EAC Treaty was signed on 30 November 1999 and came into effect on 7 July 2000 after it was ratified by the three original members: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Rwanda and Burundi acceded to the treaty in June 2007 and became full members in July 2007. South Sudan acceded to the treaty in April 2016 and became a full member in August of the same year. DR Congo acceded to the treaty in April 2022. Somalia is the **most recent country to join** after depositing its instruments of ratification on the 4 March 2024.

Headquartered in Arusha, Tanzania, the EAC covers a land area of 523 million hectares, has a population of 331 million, and has a combined GDP of US\$296 billion in 2023. The region houses a vast amount of minerals, especially in DR Congo, where large deposits of copper and cobalt remain untapped and could be realistic avenues for inward FDI. Furthermore, **recent discoveries** of natural gas and oil in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda serve as potential sources of increased energy production and economic development in the region, if managed appropriately.

The EAC's mission is to 'widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value-added production, trade and investments.' It made significant progress towards regional integration by creating a customs union in 2005, a common market in 2010, and signing a monetary union protocol in 2013. The ultimate aspiration of the REC is to create a political federation, and the first step towards this goal was taken when the EAC Heads of State adopted the political confederation as a transitional model preceding the political federation. Progress towards this goal has stalled, mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic interrupting the drafting of a constitution for the confederation, a process which only **resumed in May 2023**. Other problems also restrict progress, with **numerous trade disputes** leading to repeated border closures between members, while the continuing instability and conflict in the east of DR Congo has caused **persistent tension** in the REC.

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Mr Du Toit McLachlan joined the ISS in February 2021. He holds an honour's degree in international relations from the University of Pretoria and is the AFI website manager. His research interests include gender equality, international trade, and international geopolitics.

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