

1st PICI Strategic Reflection Webinar

Current Status and the Way Forward

14 July 2021



REPORT



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Context and Rationale

2021 is perceived as an opportune time to reflect on what the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICI) has achieved thus far and some critical considerations moving forward. Two main considerations drive such significance.

First, 2021 marks the 10th anniversary since the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative was officially launched in January 2011.

Second, this year witnessed a significant milestone in the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) as the continent embarks on the second phase of the PIDA Priority Action Plan (PIDA PAP II) for the period 2030-2021, and PIDA together with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) accelerates the fulfilment of an integrated Africa, as framed by Agenda 2063.

The PIDA PAP II project portfolio, driven by an integrated Corridor approach, entails 69 projects reflecting the AU vision within the framework of Agenda 2063 while balancing the aspirations of the respective Regional Economic Communities and Member States.

As in the first phase, the championing of the shortlisted projects at the highest levels will be essential to accelerate the implementation of the PIDA PAP II.



Topics of Discussion

Given the said importance, AUDA-NEPAD, in its capacity as the PICI Secretariat, organised a webinar on 14th July 2021 as part of a strategic webinar series for Member States to map the way forward for PICI, in collaboration with other implementing stakeholders.

Furthermore, the webinar constituted a significant platform to bring more visibility to the PICI implementation process.

Due to the large PICI project portfolio, the first webinar was confined to discuss solely PICI projects championed by Northern and Eastern Africa:

- Algeria: The Missing Link of the Trans-Sahara Highway and the Optic Fibre from Algeria via Niger to Nigeria.
- Egypt: The Construction of Navigational Line between Lake Victoria and the Mediterranean Sea.
- Kenya: The Lamu Port - South Sudan - Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) Project.
- Sudan: The Sawakin, Port Sudan Project and two related infrastructure Projects.
- Rwanda: Unblocking Political Bottlenecks for ICT Broadband and Optic Fibre Projects Linking Neighbouring and Smart Africa Initiative.

The remaining PICI projects will be addressed in the second webinar tentatively scheduled in October 2021.

Webinar Format, Keynote Speakers and Moderator

Mr. Amine Idriss, Director of Program Delivery and Coordination Directorate, AUDA-NEPAD opened the webinar, on behalf of Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki- CEO of AUDA-NEPAD.

In his opening remarks, Mr Amine Idriss welcomed the participants and provided a quick overview of the expected outcomes and relevance to cover Africa's infrastructure gap.

Then, the respective PICI Focal Points from Northern and Eastern Africa took the floor, reflecting on the key challenges and recommendations for advancing these projects and taking the initiative to a second level.

As to the way forward to advance the PICI process, Mr. Protais kanyankore, Rwanda's PICI Focal Point, underscored that AUDA-NEPAD could play a big role in increasing the awareness of all relevant stakeholders and share the benefits of One Africa Network (OAN) to implement the Smart Africa Initiative Project.

A similar recommendation was raised by Mr. Ayadi Mohammed, Secretary General of the Trans-Saharan Road Liaison Committee (TRLIC). He would count on AUDA-NEPAD' efforts to relay PICI's key challenges and recommendations to the highest political levels so that the Initiative can move forward.

Furthermore, Dr Tahani Sileet, PMU Director & Regional Coordinator-VICMED Project, urged all relevant stakeholders, including Development Partners, to mobilize funds for the Feasibility Study-Phase 2 of the VICMED project.

Equally important, holding regular meetings was perceived a key pillar towards full implementation of the LAPSSET project, by enabling all relevant stakeholders to review the progress and add value to eventually complete the project, as alluded by Amb. Dr Samori Okwiya, Chief Executive Officer, NEPAD/APRM Kenya Secretariat.

Following the PICI Focal Points' interventions, the floor was given to relevant stakeholders, including development partners, to rally coordinated multistakeholder actions for an expedited PICI implementation process.

Within this context, Mr Mxolisi Notshulwana, Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), expressed that DBSA is being encouraged by the progress achieved so far and the opportunities arising to further deepen the engagement with some of PICI projects, particularly where the bank has special interest, such as the LAPSSET.

Further support to the PICI process was extended by Dr Ini Urua, African Financial Corporation (AFC). He renewed the AFC's interest and willingness to promote the PICI implementation process, with a special focus on transport sector projects.

In her closing remarks, Dr Towela Nyirenda – Jere, Head of Economic Integration Division, AUDA-NEPAD, reiterated the readiness of AUDA- NEPAD to engage with all relevant stakeholders to speed up the PICI Initiative further.

The webinar was moderated by Dr Mustafa Sakr, AUDA-NEPAD's Coordinator for PICI.

Key Takeaway Messages



The top priority assigned by AUDA-NEPAD, as the development agency of the African Union, to promote and strengthen PICI, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders.



PICI is perceived as an effective mechanism for championing, coordinating, and accelerating the implementation of top priority infrastructure projects towards the full realisation of the PIDA PAP II.



It is important to constantly examine the key impediments encountering the PICI implementation process and advise the recommended actions accordingly.



The unavailability of funds constitutes the key impediment encountering PICI implementation process.



The renewed interest of key development partners and financial institutions, in Africa, is critical towards successful implementation of PICI projects.

Policy Recommendations

- 1 Several key policy recommendations emerged from the discussion:
- 2 Need for a common and shared framework and strategies for financial resources mobilisation and marketing for cross-border components of the PICI projects.
- 3 Setting up of a regional coordination framework for the implementation across footprint countries.
- 4 Implementation of existing respective agreements.
- 5 Continued high-level commitment across the continent.
- 6 Capacity building of the Member States' officials.
- 7 Need for completing projects' preparatory studies (such as feasibility studies) to help bring the projects to financial close.



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