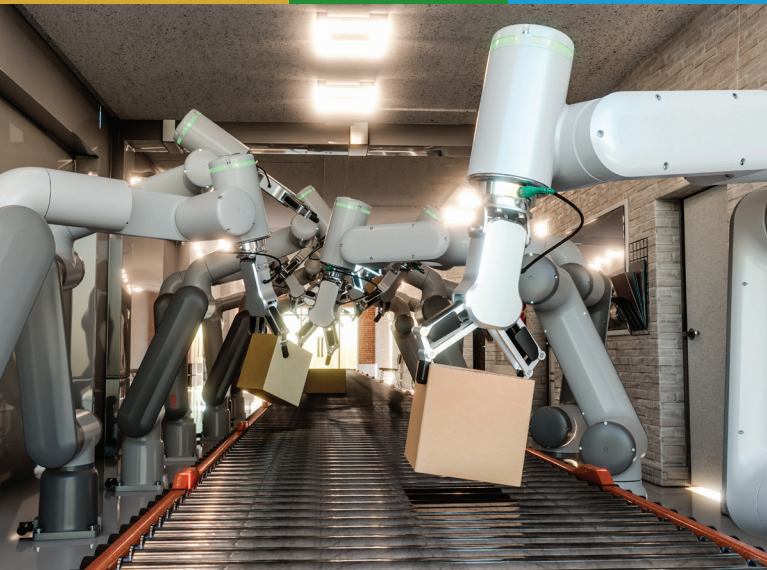


Industry

ISSUE 4 | JULY-SEPTEMBER 2025 **TODAY**



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The future is not about man versus machine. It is about man with machine.



Tobias Alando
Chief Executive
Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM)

Every industrial revolution has disrupted how humanity works, produces, and creates value. From steam to electricity, robotics to artificial intelligence, each wave has demanded reinvention. Today, in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, that responsibility is ours.

At the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), we see this revolution not only as technological but transformational, of people, policy, and purpose. Manufacturing has always been about reinvention. Now, sensors guide machines, machines generate data, and data makes decisions in real time. Globally, smart factories are customizing production and optimizing efficiency. This is no longer futuristic, it is happening in Germany, China, ASEAN, and now, gradually, in Kenya.

Kenya is lauded for digital innovation, M-Pesa, mobile banking, e-governance. Yet in manufacturing, gaps remain. Internet remains costly, with fixed broadband averaging USD 48.11 per month. Less than 25% of SMEs use cloud systems, and over 70% lack IT policies. The potential is immense, but readiness is fragmented.

That is why KAM is leading from the front. Through our 2025 Strategy, we have embedded Industry 4.0 at the core of our mission. We have:

- Partnered with the Overseas Development Institute on a 10-point digital policy framework.
- Trained over 10,000 professionals in smart manufacturing and energy efficiency.
- Conducted digitization readiness assessments for SMEs in key sectors.
- Launched Project Eagle with Moringa School to apply data science in industrial policy.

But technology alone is not transformation. Smart industries require skills, strategy, and culture. We must rewire the skills pipeline through dual TVET training models, lower the cost of capital, stabilize energy, and democratize digital access. Above all, we must back our youth as innovators and owners of Kenya's industrial future.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution will reshape jobs, but also create new ones, in machine learning, logistics, cybersecurity, and smart repair. The question is not if change will come, but how we will shape it.

Financing Kenya's Industrial Future - NAIROBI

Over 100 CEOs and policymakers gathered in Nairobi for a high-level forum hosted by NCBA and the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), focused on unlocking growth through value chain financing. With manufacturing contributing just 7.3% to GDP, far below Vision 2030's 20% target, NCBA unveiled a suite of solutions including asset leasing, trade finance, and policy advisory. Managing Director James Gossip emphasized restructuring capital flows to support every stage of production. KAM's Tobias Alando called for rhythm-aligned finance that matches production cycles, empowering SMEs and large manufacturers alike. The forum spotlighted fragmented supply chains, expensive credit, and weak competitiveness as barriers to growth. NCBA proposed risk-sharing structures tied to measurable outcomes, urging public-private partnerships to de-risk investments. The sector employs 350,000 directly and supports 1.6 million indirectly. The forum closed with a unified call to build bridges between government, financiers,



and industry, reframing finance not just as a tool, but as a shared mission for transformation.



The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), in partnership with Danish Industry and MITI, launched Kenya's first Eco-Labeling Guidelines, ushering in a new era of sustainable consumerism. The guidelines help brands showcase environmental responsibility across

Eco-Labeling Sparks Green Shift- NAIROBI

the product lifecycle, from design to disposal. KAM CEO Tobias Alando emphasized that consumers now demand transparency and values-driven products. Wahome Kinguru of MITI linked the initiative to Kenya's climate goals under the Paris Agreement, noting that updated NDCs target a 32% emissions cut by 2030. The guidelines offer compliance roadmaps and global-standard metrics, enabling Kenyan products to compete internationally. Klaus Christensen of Danish Industry urged exporters to adopt eco-labels to access European markets. More than a technical framework, the guidelines are a strategic tool for storytelling, allowing manufacturers to communicate resource efficiency and social responsibility. As sustainability becomes a competitive edge, eco-labelling positions Kenya not just as a producer of goods, but as a global champion of green innovation.

Wastewater Reuse Targets 2030 Emissions NAIROBI

NAIROBI -- Kenya's manufacturers have unveiled a roadmap to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 32% by 2030, anchored in wastewater reuse and circular economy practices. The Industrial Report, developed by KAM, Danish Industry, and the Kenya Water Institute, highlights greywater recycling, on-site treatment, and zero-liquid-discharge systems. Water and Sanitation PS Julius Korir noted that access to water has risen to over 75% in 2025, thanks to expanded sanitation and sewer systems. KAM CEO Tobias Alando called for stronger enforcement, green finance, and SME capacity-building to accelerate adoption. Kenya Water Institute's Dr. Leiro Letangule urged rapid uptake of climate-smart technologies to transform wastewater into a productive resource. The strategy reframes industrial waste as opportunity, aligning with national climate goals and global sustainability standards. As Kenya positions itself for green growth, the report



offers a blueprint for manufacturers to lead the shift—turning environmental responsibility into industrial resilience and long-term competitiveness.

Smart Manufacturing



**Lawrence Njenga, HSC
Managing Editor**

“ Smart
manufacturing is
turning innovation
into infrastructure.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to this edition of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) Industry Today Magazine, through which we seek to shape conversations on matters manufacturing. In this edition, we focus on the theme, Smart Manufacturing.

Smart manufacturing in Kenya is nascent but promising. We are making steady progress toward adopting smart manufacturing. With continued investment in technology, skills, and infrastructure, we can transition from traditional to future-ready manufacturing, driving industrial growth, job creation, and export competitiveness.

As the world continues to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution, manufacturers are reimagining operations through data-driven decision-making, automation, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT). Smart manufacturing is not just about technology—it is about creating agile, resilient, and sustainable value chains that respond in real-time to market needs.

In this issue, we delve into the innovations powering this shift. We have lined up success stories from some of our members who have successfully incorporated smart manufacturing into their processes and their experiences are quite inspiring.

From local success stories of SMEs adopting digital solutions, to policy insights driving Kenya's manufacturing competitiveness, KAM members Schneider Electric, Wylde International and Global Standards Certification (GSC) Ltd share their insights on what it truly means to transition from traditional production to smart manufacturing. We have also shared our reflections as KAM on our shared journey of driving operational excellence through the Annual Kaizen Congress, now in its 20th year.

As a sector, we must embrace technology not as a disruptor, but as a key enabler of inclusive industrial growth and global competitiveness. We hope this edition not only informs but also inspires you to take bold steps toward a smarter, more sustainable future.

Happy reading!

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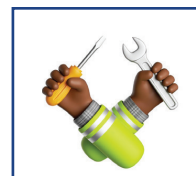


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KAM Chapter Focus:

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A digital copy of the magazine is available free at kam.co.ke.

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ABM powers Africa's future with smart tech, AI in Manufacturing

By Lynet Igadwah

Associated Battery Manufacturers, the force behind Chloride Exide batteries, is rewriting the playbook for battery manufacturing in Africa. From its hub in Athi River, Nairobi, ABM is not just producing batteries. It is powering a continent's transformation through smart technologies, automation, and artificial intelligence while keeping a relentless focus on cost competitiveness in a tough business environment.

With a legacy spanning decades and a footprint across East, Central, Southern, and West Africa, ABM manufactures about 1.5 million batteries annually. Half are sold in Kenya, while the rest energize markets from Ethiopia to Mauritius, Ghana, and Mozambique. In a world dominated by global giants with deep pockets and cutting-edge tech, ABM is proving that disciplined innovation anchored in purpose can be just as powerful.

"We are very deliberate in our investment decisions on automation and technology, ensuring they keep our products competitive, while also recognizing that labor in Kenya remains

relatively affordable," says chief executive officer Guy Jack. "We embrace technology, but we are careful not to overinvest at the expense of competitiveness."

Inside ABM's state of the art plant, sections of the production line are fully automated, with robotic systems delivering precision and consistency that human workers cannot match. Machines track every stage of the process, producing highly uniform products and enabling traceability. If a battery is returned under warranty, ABM can pinpoint the exact day, time, and conditions of its manufacture, identify the root cause, and make process improvements.

The company has integrated AI systems to enhance process adherence and quality control, using real time data to reduce faults and avoid repeat errors. Consumer feedback, warranty claims, and defect reports flow into a central database, where analytics identify trends and inform decisions. "We track data on production efficiency, quality, and consumer feedback, with AI helping us turn that data into actionable insights," says Jack.

While automation drives production efficiency, consistency, traceability, and lower operating costs, ABM has not replaced its people. The company employs just under one thousand people across its operations, maintaining a blend of skilled labor and advanced machinery. Recruitment now targets candidates with both traditional engineering skills and deeper ICT competencies, including software, robotics, and AI. In-house training has evolved to ensure teams are ready for every innovation. “Investing in smart technology means equally investing in people. Our strategy is to ensure that training runs ahead of the technology,” Jack says.

ABM’s green transition is equally bold. Leveraging Kenya’s renewable energy advantage, the company has installed a total of 1.5 megawatts of solar capacity across its operations. That includes 800 kW at its main manufacturing plant, 400 kW at its plastic molding facility, and 300 kW at its lead recycling plant. Every bit of lead used in production at ABM is recycled, and half of all battery casings come from reprocessed plastic. While smart technologies are not directly used in recycling, they aid in monitoring, marketing, and compliance tracking for the company’s circular economy initiatives.

Jack is frank about the hurdles of operating in Kenya. Electricity costs, he says, are four times higher than in China and significantly above regional averages in Tanzania and Uganda. Power and labor top the list of company expenses, but continually passing those costs to consumers is not fair. “You have to find other ways of keeping operating costs down, and for us that means using technology, automation, and smart efficiencies.”

Bureaucracy fuels inefficiencies and drives up the cost of doing business. Many countries in Africa and beyond offer incentives that offset operating costs. Kenya often does not. Even practical innovations can face uneven adoption. ABM now activates product warranties via QR codes scanned on smartphones, but in export markets such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, or Malawi, low smartphone penetration can limit effectiveness. “We want to modernize our customer experience, but we have to adapt to each market’s realities,” says Jack.

Exporting under the African Continental Free Trade Area has opened doors, but the promise on paper does not always match the reality on the ground. For ABM, exposure to international competition within Africa has been a catalyst for efficiency, quality improvement, and smart manufacturing. “If you are not exposed to global competition, you need to benchmark yourself against the best in the world,” he advises.

Looking to the future, ABM’s strategy is anchored in high productivity, cost efficiency, and constant upskilling. Jack stresses that government policy must evolve to support smart manufacturing through lower energy costs, incentives for technology adoption, and a careful balance between automation and job creation. “Smart manufacturing is modern manufacturing. To remain competitive, we must keep innovating, not just in our factories, but in how we think about costs, people, and markets.”

SIDEBAR

Kenya’s smart manufacturing moment

Kenya’s manufacturing sector matters. It contributed about 7.8 percent to GDP in 2022, valued at about 3.18 trillion shillings, and generated roughly 352,000 direct jobs. The Kenya Association of Manufacturers argues that expanding the sector’s share to 20 percent by 2030 could create one million direct jobs and reset the economy’s growth trajectory.

That is the heart of KAM’s futuristic agenda rooted in its 2024 Manufacturing Priority Agenda, which calls for lower energy costs, a simpler regulatory regime, export-led industrialization, and rapid technology adoption to unlock competitiveness.

KAM’s leadership has made AI and smart manufacturing central to that agenda. At recent industry forums, KAM has emphasized building an AI-ready workforce and scaling public-private partnerships so manufacturers can integrate AI into production lines, supply chains, and quality control. The goal is straightforward. Make Kenya a leader in the fourth industrial revolution and use AI and green industrialization to accelerate structural transformation. This includes funding support for local manufacturers and startups to integrate AI across value chains.

The direction is aligned with broader national moves. The government’s emerging AI strategy for 2025 to 2030 highlights AI’s strategic importance to productivity, and competitiveness improvement, as well as job creation, and proposes investments in digital infrastructure, talent, research, and governance to catalyze adoption. Kenya’s innovation outlook also identifies AI, the Internet of Things, robotics, and big data among priority technologies, reflecting a national push to embed these tools across sectors.

The gains from smart manufacturing are tangible. Globally, nearly all surveyed manufacturers plan to use smart technologies such as robotics, AI, and IoT in the near term. Smart factories connect machines and systems to generate real-time data, enabling predictive maintenance, faster throughput,

fewer defects, and lower costs. The big idea is to bring the physical and digital worlds together so decisions across sourcing, production, logistics, and end of life are based on data, not guesswork.

Kenyan industry voices echo the opportunity. AI can detect defects better than human eyes, enable predictive maintenance to cut downtime, and optimize energy use in a country where renewable sources already provide the bulk of grid power.

Done well, that raises quality and lowers unit costs, strengthening export competitiveness and creating new jobs in software, machine learning, and robotics, even as repetitive roles evolve. It also places Kenya on a path to cleaner, more resilient growth.

There is a warning in the data. A World Bank firm level survey finds most Kenyan firms still rely on manual processes or manually operated machines for both general business functions and sector specific tasks. On average, adoption scores show firms are using mostly basic digital tools rather than more advanced, integrated systems. Barriers include access to finance, capabilities, and market access. In short, the adoption gap is real, and closing it will be decisive for productivity and jobs.

If the world is racing toward connected, data driven factories, Kenya cannot afford to be a spectator. Oracle's analysis underscores why. Smart manufacturing is not just new machinery.

It is full system integration that shortens cycles, prevents breakdowns, and raises quality, with people still central to oversight and continuous improvement. The countries that scale this first will control costs, raise quality, and win export markets. That is the competitive frontier Kenya is approaching.

ABM as a blueprint for what is possible

ABM's playbook is a glimpse of the future KAM is pushing for. It combines automation with disciplined capital allocation so prices stay competitive. It links factory data with customer feedback so errors do not repeat. It invests in people so adoption sticks. It recycles lead and plastics while adding solar capacity so costs fall and footprints shrink. It confronts the realities of uneven smartphone access and policy frictions while continuing to export across the continent.

The lesson is bigger than batteries. When Kenyan firms blend smart technology with smart management and invest in people, they can raise quality and cut costs without cutting jobs. When policy reduces the price of power, simplifies compliance, and incentivizes tech adoption, firms scale faster. That is how Kenya turns intent into impact.

The next decade will decide whether Kenya is a producer in the AI economy or a passenger. ABM is showing what it takes to drive. KAM has set a destination and a timetable. The rest is execution.



How Italian technology is reshaping Kenya's agricultural future

By Lynnette Igadwa



When the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) – Trade Promotion Section of the Italian Embassy, opened its doors in Nairobi in April 2023, it brought more than just a new embassy annex. It unveiled a link between Italian innovation, precision engineering, and industrial know-how that could be the key to unlocking Kenya's full manufacturing potential across all sectors.

For decades, Italy has been a global leader in high-end machinery for food processing, textiles, and manufacturing. Now, that expertise is being channeled into Kenya's agricultural sector, a vital part of the nation's economy that employs over 40% of its population. The goal is to introduce smart manufacturing, a system that blends advanced machinery, automation, and digital technologies to boost productivity and reduce waste.

Kenya is at a pivotal moment. The recent EU-Kenya Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) offers duty-free, quota-free access to a market of more than 400 million consumers. However, as

Giuseppe Manenti, the Director of the ITA in Nairobi, points out, "The EU-Kenya economic agreement is just the beginning. Kenya must create demand in Europe through innovative, high-quality products that meet recognized standards."

Currently, Kenya's exports to Europe are dominated by raw commodities like tea, coffee, and cut flowers. Manenti argues that to truly capitalize on the EPA, Kenya must move beyond exporting raw materials and instead add value through processing and branding. This is where Italian technology comes in.

In the leather sector, for instance, Italian machinery has enabled Kenyan firms to transform raw hides into finished goods that are now exported to Europe. Similarly, in dairy processing, Italian-supplied machinery has helped Kenyan companies improve efficiency in milk handling and cheese production, leading to more competitive, high-quality products.

Unlike some industrial giants, Italian firms have a long history of



developing machinery for small producers. This has resulted in a human-centric design philosophy that carries over to today's smart manufacturing era, making their technology particularly well-suited for Kenya's large number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). "The entrepreneurial skills of Kenyans, combined with the experience, reliability, and ability of Italian companies to design tailor-made solutions, have already yielded excellent results," says Manenti.

One of the biggest hurdles facing Kenyan agriculture is post-harvest loss, with studies estimating that up to 40% of perishable produce never reaches the market. These losses are due to poor harvesting practices, inadequate storage, and inefficient logistics. Italian technology offers a solution. Internet of Things (IoT) and sensor-based solutions can provide temperature-controlled storage and predictive maintenance systems that prevent equipment breakdowns. For dairy farmers, IoT sensors can track milk from the farm to the factory, guaranteeing safety and freshness.

For horticulture, smart packaging and storage can extend shelf life, making exports more competitive in distant markets. But technology

is only half the solution. The other half, people. ITA is committed to address the skills gap by championing collaboration between Kenyan Institutions and private/public Italian stakeholders with exceptional expertise. This will enhance competencies in mechanical engineering and digital manufacturing. This includes opportunities for Kenyan students to intern with Italian firms. Manenti believes this skills transfer is crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the investments.

"Being able to train young people, would create a pool of high-level technicians," he adds. "When Kenyan technicians can operate, maintain, and even innovate around Italian machinery, the partnership shifts from dependency to empowerment."

Access to finance remains a significant barrier for many Kenyan businesses. To address this, Italian institutions like SACE (a public export credit agency) and Simest provide soft loans, guarantees, and insurance to companies acquiring Italian machinery. These financial tools can help spread the cost of automation over several years, making advanced technology more accessible.

Moreover, the partnership is grounded in sustainability. Italian technology offers solutions that help firms lower their carbon footprint. Predictive maintenance sensors reduce energy waste, while energy management systems allow factories to track and cut consumption. Solutions like solar-powered irrigation and on-site ice production can also reduce reliance on imported electricity.

So far, ITA has organized multiple initiatives across different sectors, including incoming missions to Italy, trade fairs and expos, and B2B forums. These efforts align with ITA's core mandate: 'Opening doors to a world of opportunities' for trade and investment.

As Kenya stands at this crossroad, the path forward is clear. As Manenti puts it, "If Kenya wants to increase its exports, it cannot do so solely with commodities. The only way forward is to add value, innovate, and industrialize."

With the right partnerships between Italian companies and Kenyan companies, this transformation is entirely within reach.



Engineering Africa's Packaging Revolution with AFROPACK Group



Featured: Makro Labelling machine

Manufacturing in Africa

Africa's manufacturing sector is at a pivotal point. While policy support is growing, escalating energy costs and fierce import competition continue to limit growth. Kenya's manufacturing, for instance, contributed just 7.6% to GDP in 2023, down from 11.3% in 2010, significantly below the global average of 12%. Yet across the continent, rapid urbanization and rising consumer demand are creating unprecedented opportuni-

ties for localized, sustainable industrial solutions. AFROPACK Group is at the heart of this transformation redefining packaging solutions by blending European engineering with African ingenuity to shape a more resilient industrial future.

Born in Italy, Built in Africa, Based in Kenya

Since 2005, AFROPACK has grown into a Pan-African packaging and processing business focused on building solutions that work for local industries and work for the long term.





From left, AFROPACK Group Regional Manager Anthony Kiarie and General Manager Daniel Kirui at the AFROPACK booth during the PROPACK event held at Sarit Center

This has helped address critical issues like unreliable equipment, long downtimes due to spare part scarcity, and poor supplier communication. Drawing from decades of European engineering excellence and deep local insight, AFROPACK delivers world-class, custom-built packaging systems for vital sectors: food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, chemicals, and agro-processing. While manufactured in Italy, each solution is optimized for African conditions, demonstrating how global technology and local relevance powerfully coexist.

This optimization involves robust engineering for the continent's diverse operational realities. AFROPACK systems feature enhanced filtration and cooling to withstand extreme dust and heat, and integrated voltage stabilization for consistent performance despite common power fluctuations. Components are also designed for easy maintenance and accessibility, acknowledging varying technical expertise and infrastructure in remote areas. This ensures maximum uptime and longevity for clients, crucial for sustained productivity across Africa.

Kenya serves as the company's East African headquarters, with service hubs now in Kampala, Tunis, Douala, and Dakar. From this base, AFROPACK delivers consultation, installation, training, remote diagnostics, and long-term technical support.

The portfolio includes top-tier Italian brands such as CLEVERTECH GROUP, FRAUGROUP, LA PARMIGIANA, IMF COFFEE ROASTERS, TECHNIPES, LAFERPACK, and MAKRO LABELLING, providing access to best-in-class technology.

In a dynamic and competitive landscape, AFROPACK differentiates itself through its unparalleled on-the ground support network. Our strategically located hubs ensure rapid response times, readily available spare parts, and localized technical expertise, with engineers trained in Italy. This commitment to local presence, combined with our proven ability to custom-engineer solutions for African realities and our foundational commitment to sustainability, uniquely positions AFROPACK as the preferred partner for long-term efficiency and responsible production on the continent.

Driving Kenya's Industrial Transformation

Leading this journey is the Managing Director, Daniel Kirui Njoroge. With years of experience in industrial engineering and a deep belief in African-led growth, Daniel has steered AFROPACK's expansion while keeping our standards high.

Under his leadership, AFROPACK has introduced systems like labeling lines that handle 45,000 bottles an hour while also staying focused on small manufacturers and regional hubs. Daniel's approach isn't about dependency; it's about building local capacity, system by system.

One example is AFROPACK's facility in Bujumbura, Burundi—a fully equipped packaging plant built with Italian machinery and materials. It serves as both a regional showroom and a working hub for East Africa, showing what's possible when quality meets local presence. This hands-on presence across the region reflects how AFROPACK grows, with the industry, and from within it.

Engineering Sustainability into Every System

At AFROPACK, we believe sustainability is not a separate agenda, it's something we build into every decision, every process, and every relationship. We're constantly learning, adjusting, and improving how we work to reduce waste, promote recyclable materials, and adopt more energy-conscious technologies. In our partnerships with manufacturers, we aim to support practical shifts not just conversations toward cleaner, more resilient systems.

Sustainability is a journey we are taking together with the industry, step by step. Each system contributes directly to the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure – strengthening Africa’s industrial backbone through resilient, advanced systems.
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption & Production – promoting eco-efficient designs and reducing packaging waste.
- SDG 13: Climate Action – lowering energy use and emissions via remote diagnostics and optimized operations.
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals – connecting African industries with global engineering partners for scalable impact.

A Future-Forward Partner for Kenya’s manufacturing industry

Industry analysts project Africa’s packaging market to grow from USD 45 billion in 2025 to USD 54 billion by 2030, with flexible packaging alone approaching USD 3 billion (5% CAGR). As demand accelerates, AFROPACK is scaling, investing in smart automation, expanding regional service hubs, and deepening its sustainable packaging division. From coffee-roasting lines in Nairobi to dairy units in Douala, AFROPACK continues transforming packaging challenges into precision-engineered opportunities.

Scaling across Africa presents challenges like varied logistics, complex customs, and skilled talent shortages. AFROPACK proactively addresses these by investing in local talent development, establishing strategic partnerships with expert logistics providers, and exploring flexible financing options through Italian finance institutions, the African Development Bank, and various grant programs to ease capital access.

This expansion is underpinned by a financial strategy. AFROPACK has demonstrated strong year-over-year revenue growth since its inception in 2005. The company is actively seeking strategic investments to further accelerate market penetration, with capital allocated towards advanced R&D for sustainable packaging solutions, enhancing manufacturing capabilities, and expanding its vital continental service network.



Featured: Miele Multihead Weigher

In 2025, AFROPACK made its presence felt at major industry exhibitions: ProPak East Africa (Nairobi, May 20–22), attracting over 5,500 professionals from 35+ countries, and it will also be participating at ProPak West Africa (Lagos, September 9–11), connecting with global brands and critical decision-makers. With Daniel Kirui at the helm and a growing footprint across Africa, AFROPACK is not just delivering machines, it’s helping shape the future of African industry, one system at a time.



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You can reach the MD directly at daniel.kirui@afropackgroup.org



Celebrating **30** YEARS

Yara sows trust, and innovation to win the hearts of Africa's farmers

By Lynette Igadwa

In a fiercely competitive agricultural inputs market, trust is often a rare but precious commodity. Yet, for Yara East Africa, it's what has become the bedrock of a remarkable journey that has transformed the company from a modest liaison office in Nairobi into a market leader in crop nutrition and soil health across Eastern and Central Africa.

Our greatest asset isn't just our fertilisers, it's the trust we've built over the decades. Farmers know we're with them every step, from soil testing to harvest, offering scientifically backed solutions and practical knowledge

William Ngéno,
Yara East Africa's Country Manager

This is a story of innovation, sustainability, and an unwavering commitment to the farmers who feed the continent.

Yara East Africa, a subsidiary of Yara International ASA, headquartered in Oslo and majority-owned by the Norwegian government, traces its global roots to 1905. Born amid a food crisis in industrial-era Europe, Yara's invention of mineral fertiliser now supports nearly half the world's food production. What began as a solution to Europe's food insecurity has grown into a mission to feed the world responsibly.

In 1989, that mission took root in East Africa when Yara, then known as Norsk Hydro, opened a representative office in Nairobi, partnering with a local firm. By 1994, it established a direct presence, working closely with retailers and plantations. Rebranded as Yara in 2004 after a global spin-off of its fertiliser division, it earned the affectionate nickname 'Chapa Meli' among Kenyan farmers, inspired by its Viking ship logo—a symbol far more resonant than the Nordic-sounding 'Norsk Hydro'.





Fertilizer Association of Kenya (FA-K)
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Congratulations, Yara East Africa, on three decades of purpose-driven leadership and agricultural transformation!

The Fertilizer Association of Kenya (FA-K) proudly congratulates Yara East Africa Ltd on achieving a remarkable milestone — 30 years of advancing agricultural excellence and sustainability in Kenya. Since its establishment, Yara East Africa has been a driving force in transforming Kenya's agricultural sector. Through innovative crop nutrition solutions and precision farming technologies, Yara has empowered farmers to increase yields, improve crop quality, and reduce their environmental footprint — all while supporting food security across the region.

As the umbrella body for the fertilizer industry in Kenya, FA-K is honored to stand alongside visionary partners like Yara East Africa, whose leadership continues to inspire progress and innovation throughout the agriculture sector.

We are proud to join Yara East Africa in commemorating this 30-year milestone and look forward to many more years of shared impact and collaboration.

Who Is Fertilizer Association of Kenya (FA-K)

The Fertilizer Association of Kenya (FA-K) serves as the leading umbrella organization for manufacturers, importers, formulators, blenders, and distributors of both organic and inorganic fertilizers in Kenya. Founded in 2009, FA-K's core mission is to advocate for its members, ensuring their interests are protected while promoting professionalism and ethical standards within the fertilizer industry.

With a network representing over 12,000 agro-dealers, 150 distributors, and 25 fertilizer manufacturers and importers, FA-K has consistently prioritized delivering high-quality crop nutrition products to farmers. The Association actively promotes the use of sustainable crop nutrition products for both small-scale and large-scale farming, acting as a vital link between its members and the Government on issues of mutual concern.

A key pillar of FA-K's work is stewardship, with a strong emphasis on farmer education and awareness creation. FA-K recognizes that enhancing knowledge among farmers is critical for improving fertilizer use efficiency and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Our Motto - "Feed the Soil, Feed the Crop, Feed the Nation"

Our Mandate: Protecting and furthering members' interests as well as instilling professionalism and ethical standards within the fertilizer industry.

Our Mission: To Provide Crop and Soil Nutrition Solutions that Enhances Sustainable Agricultural Production

Our Vision: To be the trusted authority in Sustainable Crop Production for a Productive and Food Secure Nation.

If you are active in Kenya's fertilizer sector, becoming a member of FA-K offers numerous advantages that can enhance your professional development and business achievements.

Join the FA-K community to take advantage of these benefits.
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Here: <https://www.fa-k.or.ke/joining-the-association/>

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From a team of just three, Yara East Africa now employs over 60 staff in Kenya, initially serving Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia from its Nairobi hub. Today, it operates separate units in Rwanda and Tanzania, while Kenya continues to support Uganda due to logistical synergies. Each expansion has been strategic, cementing Yara's role as a pivotal player in the region's agricultural development.

A game-changer came with the establishment of a fertiliser blending plant in Mombasa. Initially, Yara imported ready-made products from Europe, but the team soon realised Kenyan soils demanded tailored solutions. "What works in Europe doesn't necessarily work here," Mr Ngéno explains. "We invested in research and began blending fertilisers specific to local soils and crops." The result is a portfolio of crop-specific fertilisers for maize, tea, coffee, and more, distributed through centres in Mombasa, Nairobi, and Eldoret.

Yara's range includes granular field grades, such as MiCROP Planting and Yara Millers, applied during planting and top dressing, and liquid foliars, sprayed after mixing with water. With over 50 products—both imported and locally blended—Yara serves everyone from smallholder farmers to large-scale plantations. Its rigorous supply chain quality control has earned it the prestigious IFA certification, the only importer in the region to hold this global standard, akin to ISO in the fertiliser industry. "This standard builds consumer

trust," Mr Ngéno says. "Farmers know they're investing in products that deliver real value to their crops and families." With over 70% of Kenya's population under 35, Yara sees youth engagement as critical to agriculture's future. Through its Shujaaz programme, the company showcases farming's profitability, repositioning it as a vibrant career path. "Farming isn't a fallback—it's a smart, sustainable business," Mr Ngéno asserts. "To attract youth, we must digitise, professionalise, and elevate agriculture to match their aspirations."

The programme operates on three tiers: spotlighting community leaders championing regenerative farming, promoting high-performance products for better yields, and offering affordable fertiliser solutions like MiCROP, guiding farmers away from traditional DAP to smarter alternatives. Recognising that retailers need more than technical skills, Yara launched the Grow X programme, formerly the Yara Leadership Academy. This 14-week course, akin to a compact MBA, equips agri-input distributors with financial, management, and entrepreneurial skills. "As MSMEs grow, they drive revenues, create jobs, and boost local economies," Mr Ngéno notes. "This aligns with our ambition to nurture a nature-positive food future, transforming how food is produced to support prosperity and protect the environment."

To reach remote farmers, Yara has embraced digital transformation, mapping over 7,000 channel distributors across Kenya to ensure every ward has at least two well-equipped stockists trained to provide advisory services. Two mobile applications, Yara Connect for retailers and FarmCare for farmers, bridge the knowledge gap. Retailers access training materials and deliver crop-specific advice, while farmers can map their land, locate authorised stockists, receive accurate weather forecasts, and verify genuine products. "Counterfeits are a major threat, accounting for up to 20% of the market," Mr Ngéno says. "With FarmCare, farmers can confirm authentic Yara distributors and make informed choices."

Unlike many corporations, Yara's corporate social responsibility focuses on knowledge transfer rather than traditional models. Operating under the tagline 'Knowledge Grows', the company employs over 20 in-house agronomists and engages more than 100 temporary specialists during peak seasons to train farmers nationwide. "On any given day, our agronomists reach over 300 farmers," Mr Ngéno says. These sessions cover fertiliser use, seed selection, soil health, crop husbandry, and climate-smart agriculture—critical support as government extension services have weakened.

The shift from cooperative to individual farming in the 1990s, coupled with land subdivision, has made service delivery complex, especially for smallholder farmers with 1–2 acres. In collaboration with the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO), Yara developed MiCROP, a crop-specific, multi-nutrient fertiliser launched in 2023, already



Seaforth would like to congratulate Yara East Africa for transforming agriculture and enriching lives across the region. We are proud to have been your partner for over 25 years.



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SUPPLEMENT FEATURE

delivering impressive yield gains. Partnerships are central to Yara's innovation. "Our collaboration with KALRO led to tailored solutions for local soils and crops," says Dr Winnie Ng'ang'a, Yara's Director for Government Relations and Public Affairs, Africa. "We also work with KIPPRA on policy discussions and fertiliser recommendations to prioritise soil health, alongside crop protection and seed companies, and agri-service providers focused on soil testing."

On the policy front, Yara supports the Africa Fertiliser and

Soil Health Action Plan, aligning with its vision of restoring soils and delivering appropriate fertilisers for Africa.

Achieving this requires a supportive environment where government and private sector collaborate to increase yields for farmers,

Dr. Ng'anga



Celebrating 30 years in East Africa is a testament to Yara's dynamic team, with an average age in their 30s. From a small liaison office to investing in blending plants and building local capacity, Yara's journey reflects a bright future. "We're not just selling products; we're driven by talent, innovation, and a commitment to adding real value," Mr Ngéno reflects. "This anniversary is a moment to celebrate strong leadership and a solid foundation." The celebrations will culminate in October on World Food Day, with partners, government, and customers joining Yara to honour this milestone.



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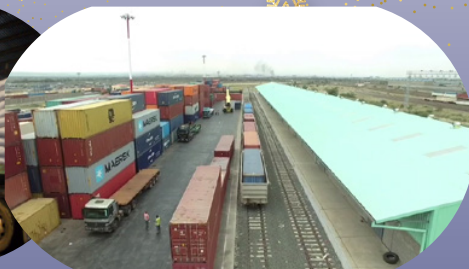
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As you celebrate this milestone, we look forward to many more years of shared achievements and growth. Here's to the next 30 years—may they be even more successful!

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From London Finance to Indigenous Wellness

Harriet Ng'ok's Quest to Transform Kenya's Herbal Medicine Industry

By Margaret Kanini



Harriet Chebet Ng'ok
Director - Harriet's Botanicals

Harriet Chebet Ng'ok left a high-profile career in London finance to reconnect with her roots and launch Kenya's first indigenous wellness company. A personal battle with endometriosis sent her on a quest for natural remedies that evolved into Harriet's Botanicals. Now in its fifth year, the start-up has grown from a side project into a national brand that blends traditional knowledge with modern business practices. In this interview Chebet explains how purpose and empathy drive her leadership, why trust remains her most valuable asset and how she is redefining the future of wellness in Africa.

You built a successful career in global finance before founding Harriet's Botanicals. How did your experience at firms like JP Morgan Chase and Goldman Sachs shape your leadership approach?

I earned both my LLM and LLB in International Banking and Finance and Mercantile Law from the London School of Economics. After graduation I was headhunted by JP Morgan Chase. I later worked at Goldman Sachs and the UK Financial Services Authority. Those environments were intense and highly competitive because everyone came from top universities. You learned to excel under pressure and to expect the very best of yourself and your colleagues. That background taught me to set high performance standards and to hold my team to them. In Kenya I see immense untapped potential. Many people are capable of operating on a global stage, but they aren't always given the chance. I feel a calling to help local talent reach world-class levels of professionalism.

Harriet's Botanicals grew out of your own health journey. How has that origin story influenced your vision and values as a leader?

Everything about this company is personal. I suffered from endometriosis throughout high school without a diagnosis,





enduring excruciating pain every month. When I moved to London I accessed Western medical care, but I was also curious about natural remedies. In 2017 I returned to Kenya after my father passed away. A family friend saw me in pain and offered my first set of botanical treatments. For the first time in years I experienced painless periods. That moment awakened me to the power of indigenous medicine. It made me determined to demystify traditional healing, to ensure that women and men have access to safe, scientifically validated alternatives. My leadership is guided by empathy and a desire to share the relief I found with everyone who needs it.

What does purpose-driven leadership mean to you, and how do you keep that purpose alive in day-to-day operations?

Purpose-driven leadership begins with recognizing that people come from diverse backgrounds. In London at Goldman Sachs, we were similar in education and training. Here, team members differ widely in community, schooling and outlook. I have to meet each person where they are, understand their motivations and guide them toward our shared goals. That takes time and genuine empathy. Day to day I focus on transparent communication, celebrating small wins and ensuring that everyone knows how their work contributes to our vision of elevating indigenous wellness.

What has been your most defining leadership challenge since founding the company?

Last year's youth-led protests created the first political disruption I ever faced as a business owner. I assumed any unrest would be

directed at government, but in 2024 young citizens shut down the central business district in Nairobi, where most of our retail outlets are located. My team felt the protests were more important than our sales or stability. While I understood their passion for change, I still had fixed costs and payroll to cover. We closed our CBD outlets for the entire month of June and some branches in Nakuru and Mombasa temporarily as well. Navigating that tension between social responsibility and business continuity tested my ability to adapt quickly and to support my staff through uncertainty.

How did you overcome skepticism about traditional medicine when you entered the market?

It took us three years to shift public perception. Early on we were ridiculed on social media as quacks. Some classmates even gave me insulting nicknames like "Mitishambaress". But I embraced the challenge. We invested heavily in customer education, explaining the science behind each botanical blend and demonstrating consistent quality. We built a robust customer relationship management system and engaged across television, radio and social media. We invited allopathic doctors and researchers to share platforms with us. Over time people saw that our products were reliable and that our approach was honest and evidence based. Today we work with doctors, nurses and regulatory bodies to develop clinical research and to ensure every product meets stringent safety standards.

Do you see Harriet's Botanicals as a pioneer in Kenya's herbal medicine industry?

Absolutely. We work closely with government regulators,



professional medical bodies, researchers and traditional healers. We have applied for funding to conduct clinical trials on key products. My background in finance and law gives me a strong foundation to formalize this industry. We are the first to integrate botanical medicine into mainstream health care while building a scalable business model that rural farmers and urban retailers can both support.

Have you ever doubted your path, and how did you lead through those moments?

At first Harriet's Botanicals was simply a side hustle. I maintained my finance job as my main source of income. Only recently did I feel the pressure of scaling and growth. When I faced stress or uncertainty I reminded myself to take one day at a time. I joined professional networks such as the Kenya Association of Manufacturers and the Kenya Private Sector Alliance. Those groups provided credibility and peer support. Surrounding myself with other entrepreneurs helped me recognize that challenges are part of the journey and that persistence is the key to success.

What leadership decisions have been pivotal in scaling your business?

Bringing in the right people at the right time is fundamental. Trust

is essential when you work with traditional knowledge. Early on I focused on recruiting experienced botanists, production specialists and sales managers who shared our vision. I also invested in systems that outlast any individual. For example, our customer relationship management platform and our phone system allow us to track every inquiry and purchase. That consistency builds trust and efficiency. Another critical step was knowledge management. We created an internal portal to document every formula, process and lesson learned. When we expand to new regions, we can train and maintain managers in Eldoret, Kisumu or Mombasa to replicate our model exactly.

How do you use data, customer feedback and community insights in decision making?

Data is the backbone of our commercial strategy. Our CRM tracks who walks into each shop, what they buy, their age and buying patterns. That information guides inventory planning, marketing campaigns and product development. For instance, our women's health line is the most popular. We look at the data to ask why some blends underperform and then adjust formulations or refine our messaging. Without precise data you are guessing. With it you can tailor your offerings and build stronger relationships with customers.

How do you balance tradition and innovation in product development and branding?

Innovation for us means modernizing ancient wisdom. We have one physician, Dr Kireki Omawna, who presents the allopathic perspective, and we offer the traditional view side by side. We host live discussions on social media platforms covering topics from infertility and IVF to surrogacy. We invest in high-quality packaging, digital content and storytelling that resonates with a new generation. We share detailed usage instructions and safety information online and in print. This blend of culture, science and





technology sets us apart.

How do you cultivate a culture of trust, creativity and accountability within your team?

We operate with a flat organizational structure in an open-plan office. I sit at one of the desks alongside team members. If a shop needs extra help I'm washing dishes or serving customers with them. We work events together and we share all information openly. I call my staff team leaders because I want them to own their roles. Most of my staff are under thirty-five and may not have advanced degrees. I encourage them to believe that education level does not determine potential. Daily feedback and clear communication ensure that everyone knows where they stand and how they can grow.

What practices help you retain and grow talent in a values driven business?

I prioritize fair compensation so my salaries are above market in this industry. I believe in workplace diversity that reflects Kenya's regions and demographics. We enforce regular work hours and guarantee breaks to prevent burnout. I am active on every WhatsApp group, from customer service to production teams, so communication is constant. We also hold regular performance reviews that address career development. When difficult conversations are necessary I address issues directly and constructively. My goal is that every team member leaves my company with stronger skills and greater confidence, ready to succeed anywhere.

Your work spans wellness, culture and economic development. How do you define impact as a leader?

Impact means creating something entirely new and sharing it with the world. Our social media followers tell us we are unique and pioneering. We empower rural women and Maasai communities by sourcing botanicals from their lands at fair prices. That income transforms lives and preserves indigenous knowledge. We measure impact both in lives changed and in community wellbeing.

What legacy do you hope to leave as a businesswoman and custodian of indigenous knowledge?

I want every Kenyan community to identify its own botanical assets, document traditional remedies and build businesses that reach local and international markets. By preserving indigenous wisdom we create intrinsic value in our heritage and extrinsic value in income and opportunity. I see a future where we are no longer dependent on imported supplements because we have everything we need right here.

What leadership qualities will matter most for the next generation of African entrepreneurs?

Empathy is critical — truly listening to people with different life experiences. Innovation comes from improving what already exists and creating new solutions. Ideation means generating ideas without fear of failure. These qualities will drive Africa's next wave of world-class businesses.

If you could mentor your younger self what advice would you offer?

I would have started this work even earlier, perhaps at eighteen. I spent years in law and finance before discovering the deep value of our natural heritage. I would tell my younger self that purpose can align with profit and that the seeds of transformation often grow from personal challenges.

Less than 30 days left, which way for Kenya-US trade relations?

By Pankaj Bedi



“
AGOA has stitched
Kenya into the fabric
of global trade
powering exports,
jobs, and hope
across the nation.”

In less than 30 days, one of Kenya's greatest economic lifelines could come to an end. On 30th September 2025, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the trade framework that has cemented Kenya's position as Sub-Saharan Africa's apparel manufacturing hub, is set to expire. The US Congress is broadly supportive of its renewal, with Democrats and Republicans aligned. But support in Washington means little if Kenya itself is not urgently and visibly fighting for its survival.

I speak as an investor who has built factories here, not because Kenya offered the cheapest labour or the fastest ports, but because it had something no one else could match: guaranteed duty-free access to the US market. That single advantage to Kenya has anchored billions of shillings in investment, sustained over 66,000 direct jobs in the apparel industry alone, with a one-to-one ratio of indirect jobs, and supported an estimated five dependents per worker. This means that approximately 660,000 Kenyans rely on apparel exports to the U.S. under AGOA for their livelihoods.

The truth is blunt. Investors set up in Kenya to access the US duty-free. Competing against Bangladesh, Vietnam, or Egypt without it is untenable. AGOA has been our competitive edge. Without it, we risk losing a critical driver of growth, and Kenya's seat at the global manufacturing table could disappear, erasing 25 years of progress.

These final days matter. Securing AGOA's extension is an urgent national priority. The recent visit to Washington led by the Cabinet Secretary of Investment, Trade and Industrialisation, Hon. Lee Kinyanjui, shows the Government's understanding of what is at stake. But continuing such engagements will be essential until our agenda is achieved, as time is short and only strong government-to-government interactions can deliver results.

The US remains Kenya's largest apparel export destination. In a world of shifting supply chains, Kenya can position itself as a stable, ethical source, but only if it retains this access. AGOA is not only a trade agreement but a driver of jobs, stability, and growth, supporting workers, cotton farmers, and logistics operators. Without it, jobs will vanish, and the shocks will ripple far beyond export zones.

If AGOA cannot be renewed in time, Kenya must pivot immediately to a fallback plan: a Kenya-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) built on Kenya's longstanding strategic partnership with the US and the low level of trade competition between the two countries. Kenya's economy is a fraction of America's, \$120 billion compared to \$30 trillion. The US grows by \$600 billion every year, 5 times the size of Kenya's entire economy. A win-win FTA would secure supply chains, attract new investment, and provide the predictability investors demand. In uncertain times, predictability is priceless.

A responsible nation also prepares for the worst. If neither AGOA nor a bilateral FTA is secured in time, Kenya must have a survival strategy ready, one that shields factories and workers from immediate collapse. We cannot afford

the devastation seen in Lesotho and Ethiopia, where the loss or suspension of AGOA has led to factory closures and mass layoffs within weeks.

A mitigation package could bridge the gap: targeted incentives to offset US import duties, support to sustain factories, and transitional financing to protect jobs until certainty returns. This is not subsidy for its own sake; it is safeguarding livelihoods during uncertainty.

Every year, about 400,000 young Kenyans leave school at the primary-to-secondary transition, while 1.2 million join the workforce annually after high school. Not all will become software developers or engineers, but sectors like apparel, agriculture, and light manufacturing can provide dignified jobs close to home if nurtured. As Kenya seeks to explore various opportunities for the youth, including labour migration alongside other homegrown solutions, the real victory is when a young person can earn enough to support their family without leaving the country. At home, even a modest wage carries dignity and security that cannot be measured only in shillings.

This moment is also about Kenya's place in the global power game. Power is not only military strength or political influence; it is also the resilience of our economy, and the clarity of our long-term strategy.

The geopolitical tensions and fractured supply chains have opened a narrow window for countries like Kenya to claim a bigger role in global manufacturing. If we act decisively, we could

spark a new industrial and agricultural transformation. But such windows do not stay open forever.

The US is still the largest consumer market on earth. Long-term access to it could be a game-changer not just for textiles, but for agriculture, processed foods, and other value-added exports. If Kenya aligns its policies to capture this opportunity, the benefits will ripple far beyond the export zones.

The decisions we make in these few weeks will echo for decades. They will determine whether we build a stronger economic foundation brick by brick, or whether we watch the scaffolding we have assembled over two decades come crashing down. National pride has its place, but so does economic pragmatism. Balanced wisely, they reinforce each other. What matters now is not applause in the moment, but stability in the future.

By acting decisively, the government can not only reassure investors but also protect the livelihoods of millions of Kenyans who depend on this opportunity. Every day of delay is a risk we cannot afford. With bold, coordinated steps, Kenya can turn this inflection point into a launchpad for sustained industrial growth.

The writer is the Apparels Manufacturers and Exporters (EPZ) Sector Chair and a Board Director at Kenya Association of Manufacturers and can be reached at info@kam.co.ke.



Fixing the Flow

How Kaizen Is Reshaping East Africa's Industrial Future

By Joyce Njogu



In 2025, the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), in collaboration with Kaizen Institute, proudly celebrates two decades of the Kaizen Congress East Africa. This landmark occasion reflects not only our shared journey of driving operational excellence but also our long-term commitment to empowering industries with the tools, knowledge and culture needed for sustainable growth.

From modest beginnings to becoming the region's leading platform for productivity improvement, the Kaizen Congress East Africa has been a catalyst for transformation in manufacturing and beyond. It has consistently championed the principles of Kaizen, the Japanese philosophy of continuous, incremental improvement, demonstrating that small, deliberate changes lead to significant and lasting impact.

Two Decades of Impact

Twenty years ago, few East African industries had heard of Kaizen. Today, it is a recognized approach to cutting waste, optimizing processes, improving quality and enhancing competitiveness. Since the inaugural congress, we have:

- Trained thousands of professionals across manufacturing, healthcare,

finance and public service.

- Documented success stories where companies reduced production times by more than 30 percent, cut costs while maintaining quality and boosted output capacity.
- Nurtured a generation of in-house Kaizen champions who drive change daily in their workplaces.

Our journey has also attracted regional participation, making the congress a cross-border knowledge hub for operational excellence.

Kaizen Congress 2025: Fixing the Flow

This year's theme, "Fixing the Flow: Operational Excellence for Cost, Capacity and Competitiveness," speaks directly to the challenges and opportunities facing industry today.

The manufacturing sector is navigating a complex global landscape: rising input costs, supply chain disruptions, evolving customer demands and a heightened need for sustainability. Fixing the flow is about removing bottlenecks, streamlining value streams and ensuring that every step in the process adds value.

When we optimize flow, we not only reduce costs but also unlock capacity and strengthen our position in both domestic and export markets. Kaizen principles give us the discipline, mindset and tools to achieve this in a structured and measurable way.

From Tools to Mindset

One of the greatest achievements of the past 20 years has been shifting Kaizen from being seen as a set of tools to being embraced as a culture of improvement. Today, we see companies where:

- Employees at all levels actively seek better ways of doing things.

- Leaders measure success not only by profits but by process health and team engagement.
- Continuous improvement is embedded in strategic planning and daily operations.

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate this milestone, our vision for the next 20 years is clear: to make operational excellence the default standard in East Africa. This means expanding the reach of Kaizen training, deepening collaboration with government and academia and embracing new technologies that complement the Kaizen philosophy.

The 2025 congress will be more than a celebration. It will be a working forum where we share lessons, explore innovations and develop practical strategies for industries to thrive amid change.

We invite all industry leaders, policymakers and operational excellence practitioners to join us in Fixing the Flow. Let us work together to reduce costs, expand capacity and elevate East Africa's competitiveness on the global stage.

As we mark 20 years of Kaizen Congress East Africa, we are reminded that continuous improvement is not a destination. It is a journey. And in this journey, every step forward, no matter how small, brings us closer to the excellence we envision.

Here's to 20 years of progress and to a future where operational excellence is not an aspiration but a way of life.

Joyce Njogu is the Head of KAM Consulting and Sustainability at the Kenya Association of Manufacturers.



Browns East Africa:

Tea, innovation and human resilience

By Ochieng Rapuro



Browns East Africa Plantations is stewarding some of Kenya's most storied tea estates -- some of the plantations, have been in existence for over 100 years under various owners -- a history that matters as much to the communities who have lived and worked on these hills as it does to the company itself.

Chief Executive Officer Rajiv Bandaranayake, who has spent decades in tea fields himself, describes the moment as both humbling and demanding. "It is incredibly humbling to be part of a legacy built over generations. We stand on the shoulders of planters, farmers and resilient communities. This history is not only a celebration of the past but a reminder of the responsibility we carry to preserve what has been built while reimagining agriculture for an era that demands sustainability and inclusivity," he says.

Tea has been cultivated on these highland estates since the 1920s, and over time the terrain has become a laboratory of agronomic progress. Under its current stewardship, Browns has invested in plant breeding that produced drought-tolerant clones capable of doubling yields per hectare, introduced mechanization to streamline fieldwork and pioneered black tea manufacturing technologies that

set new global standards. A defining milestone came in 2007 when one of the estates achieved Rainforest Alliance certification, widely recognized as a breakthrough that confirmed Browns was not just producing tea but setting the pace for sustainable agriculture.

Research and innovation remain central. Collaborations with universities in Europe and Africa have helped refine everything from fertilizer modeling to drone-powered precision agriculture. The company's factories have been retooled to accommodate not only black tea but also green and specialty varieties, and even teas designed to infuse in cold water, an innovation aimed at younger, urban consumers whose lifestyles no longer revolve around the traditional teapot.

Bandaranayake believes such innovations are critical not just for market competitiveness but also for environmental responsibility. "When we create teas that can infuse in cold water, we are not only addressing the fast pace of modern life but also reducing greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating the need for boiling," he notes.

Energy has been another frontier where Browns has sought to



lead rather than follow. Today more than ninety percent of its energy comes from renewable sources. Hydropower is harnessed from rivers running through the estates, solar panels power critical operations and biomass boilers burn sustainably grown eucalyptus. Such investments have reduced costs and enhanced efficiency, but they also illustrate a philosophy that refuses to separate profit from planet. In the same spirit, the company has made biodiversity conservation a pillar of its strategy. More than ten percent of its estate land is reserved as natural forest cover, home to native birds,

insects and wildlife. Beyond its own fences, Browns has committed to restoring 60,000 hectares of the Mau Forest by 2030. More than one million trees have already been planted, signaling that this is not a symbolic pledge but a generational one.

Yet for all the emphasis on science and technology, Bandaranayake insists that people remain the true strength of the company. From pickers selecting the finest leaves in Kericho to technicians in modernized factories, every worker is seen as part of a chain



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that safeguards the quality and reputation of Kenyan tea. “Our values are not written, they are lived. Respect, integrity, care and excellence guide us in how we treat employees, how we engage with communities and how we grow and market our tea. These values have anchored us through decades of uncertainty,” he says.

The company has invested heavily in the communities that surround its estates. In Kericho County alone, Browns has reached all 30



wards with projects worth more than 300 million shillings. These include schools with improved infrastructure, clinics offering medical interventions, water projects that end decades of scarcity and training programs that help young people start businesses or secure apprenticeships. These initiatives have blurred the line between company and community. Browns is no longer seen only as an employer but also as a development partner, one whose fortunes rise and fall with those of its neighbors.

Bandaranayake recalls moments when this connection was most visible. “Some of my proudest experiences as CEO are when we

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stand shoulder to shoulder with communities, whether it is launching a new water project that transforms daily life, watching children learn in improved classrooms or seeing young people we have trained in entrepreneurship start to build their futures. Those are the moments that remind us why we do what we do," he says.

This community engagement has also given the company a moral authority at a time when the agricultural sector faces growing scrutiny. In an era of climate anxiety and calls for just transitions, Browns has shown that a plantation model can evolve into something more symbiotic. Bandaranayake argues that Kenyan tea has a natural sustainability advantage that is still underappreciated globally. Unlike many other tea-producing regions, most Kenyan tea is rain fed and produced with little or no synthetic pesticide use. "Kenyan tea is the best in the world. It is produced without pesticides and by and large it is rain fed. This is a fact that consumers across the globe have not fully grasped and it is time we told this story more boldly," he stresses.

The global tea market has changed dramatically over the decades. Consumers now demand not just quality but also transparency, ethical sourcing and sustainability credentials. East Africa's agricultural landscape is increasingly shaped by technology



Congratulations



on your 100th anniversary!
We toast to your achievement and
we are proud to be associated with
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*To empower our customers to create
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KTGA CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE ON BEAP AT 100 YEARS

KTGA advocates for a supportive business environment for large-scale tea producers in the cultivation and manufacture of tea. The Association promotes harmonious industrial relations to secure decent work and incomes for employees in tea. Our members, model a sustainable tea sub-sector invested in communities, preserving the environment and fostering rural development in Kenya.

We take this opportunity to congratulate Browns Plantations East Africa

INDUSTRY POSITION

As large-scale tea growers, we congratulate Browns East Africa Plc on this occasion. We are not only fostering a culture of community investment, but also advancing equality and empowerment within our members with the aim of attaining at least 50% women inclusion. The sector players have improved their capability for employee safeguarding and human rights protection through measures including redesigning welfare and gender functions within the organizations, investing in the professional development and skills training of female employees and empowering gender leadership teams; enabling them to take on leadership roles, contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes, and drive innovation and growth within the industry.

Membership of the Kenya Tea Growers Association operates in four Branches namely: Kericho, Sotik, Limuru and Nandi. To learn more about us, visit our website at www.ktga.or.ke



CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF KTGA ON THE OCCASION TO MARK 100 YEARS OF THE ESTATES OF BROWNS EAST AFRICA PLANTATIONS PLC.



I am truly delighted to celebrate with Browns East Africa Plantations on marking 100 years of operations of their estates. I am filled with immense pride, along with the entire industry, seeing the central role that tea continues to play as the cornerstone of Kenya's economy. The industry has transformed countless lives, providing livelihoods for millions, generating significant foreign exchange earnings, and serving as a beacon of hope for rural communities.

Browns East Africa shares this commitment to making impact to individual incomes, including smallholder farmers, women and youth, who play a crucial role in our industry.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM THE CEO, KTGA



I take this opportunity on the auspicious occasion to mark 100 years of operations of the estates of Browns East Africa Plantations. As a member of KTGA, they have supported education, healthcare, water, infrastructure development and youth empowerment in the community.

We recognize the leadership in gender initiatives that enable and recognize the vital role that women play in the tea value chain. Browns East Africa Plantations has mainstreamed the diversity agenda in policy and governance frameworks with specific emphasis on empowering women, promoting gender equality and fostering inclusive growth.

Large-scale tea growers continue to produce highquality, chemical-free, and sustainably cultivated tea. Tea growing and production also present opportunities to embrace green energy solutions, while geographical indications of Kenyan tea will enable us to unlock the true value of our teas. These opportunities highlight a bright and promising future for the Kenyan tea sector. For this potential to be realized, the industry must be supported by a business environment that enhances export competitiveness. This requires collaborative and consultative policy development, alongside focused efforts to market, innovate, and strengthen our global positioning.

Kenya's youth dividend presents a generation ready to transform the industry. A youthful, health-conscious, and globally connected population of tea consumers and professionals is emerging one that can showcase Kenya's heritage through tea grown in our highlands, the same lands that nurture world-class athletes. Their involvement in modern agricultural practices, integration of artificial intelligence, and adoption of climate-smart innovations will be vital in boosting productivity, sustainability, and market appeal. With rising talent and innovation shaping the industry, the future of Kenyan tea is assured and ready for global leadership.



Congratulations Browns East Africa Plantations

As you celebrate 100 years, receive the warmest of wishes and regards from all of us at Vivo Energy Kenya Limited. We are proud to be associated with you and reaffirm our commitment to you.

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Growing Businesses. Transforming Supply Chains.

and climate pressures, requiring companies to adapt or risk being left behind. Browns has embraced these changes by introducing mechanization, digitizing supply chains and aligning its practices with international quality and sustainability standards. It has also begun diversifying into organic and specialty teas to meet evolving consumer preferences.

The road ahead will not be without challenges. Climate change threatens rainfall patterns, global markets demand ever more stringent certification and traceability, and the rising cost of energy and labor tests margins. Yet Bandaranayake sees in these pressures an opportunity to lead. "Agribusiness today is about more than just producing. It is about creating shared value for people and the planet. We must raise the bar not just for our operations but for the entire industry. Bold and visionary leadership is the only way to navigate uncertainty and drive purpose-driven transformation," he says.

His outlook for the years ahead is ambitious. Browns has set a target of achieving one hundred percent renewable energy use by 2030, a bold step in an industry still struggling to reconcile commercial viability with environmental responsibility. It also intends to accelerate its digital transformation by embedding precision agriculture and



data-driven technologies across its operations, ensuring that the company remains globally competitive while staying rooted in local communities.



TEMEC Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of KTDA (H) Ltd, specializes in the fabrication, installation, repair, and maintenance of tea processing machinery and equipment. TEMEC is committed to delivering innovative, high-quality engineering solutions at competitive prices and within set timelines.



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Congratulations!

We extend our warmest congratulations to Browns East Africa Plantations on your remarkable 100th Anniversary.

This centennial milestone is a true testament to your enduring commitment to quality, sustainability, and innovation in the agricultural sector.

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As Browns Plantations East Africa celebrates 100 years of heritage, the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization – Tea Research Institute (KALRO-TRI) joins in honoring a partnership built on innovation, resilience, and shared purpose. What began as a collaboration in agronomic trials has evolved into a strategic relationship that has strengthened both institutions and advanced the future of Kenyan tea.

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Bandaranayake carries with him a guiding principle that captures the company's long view of agriculture. "Plant seeds of change, even if you may not sit in the shade of the tree," he says. It is a reminder that true leadership in agriculture is about legacy and long-term value, about building something that will outlast us all.

When the history of African agriculture is written, Browns hopes to be remembered not merely as a producer of tea but as a pioneer that blended tradition with transformation, a company that grew crops but also grew communities. For Bandaranayake, that is the legacy worth celebrating and the promise that must guide the years ahead in the misty green hills of Kenya.





Tunakujali!

Congratulations!

BROWNS EAST AFRICA PLANTATIONS
on your remarkable 100th Anniversary!






Simba Chai Sacco Ltd was formed in 1977 by accounts personnel of Unilever Tea Kenya Limited (now Browns Plantations East Africa PLC) and was initially registered as Kericho Hesabu with only 35 members. Over the years, the SACCO has expanded its membership bond to include farmers, business people, corporate clients, schools, microcredit groups and chamas.

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Kenya Association of Manufacturers



KAM_Kenya

KAM Chapter Focus: Nairobi Region



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An Overview of the Region

KAM Nairobi Region was established in 2013 to drive the advocacy agenda for manufacturing and value add industries in the Industrial Area. It is home to approximately 60% of KAM Members, spread across all manufacturing, value add and service sectors. The regional office is at Twiga Chemical Industries in Industrial Area. The main industrial hubs for the region are Ruaraka, Embakasi, Makadara and Starehe sub-counties.

Regional Leadership

The Region is led by a committee headed by a Chairperson, 1st Vice Chairperson and 2nd Vice Chairperson who are supported by the Regional Coordinators, Charles Karumba and Daniel Ogando.

The current regional leadership is as follows: (Insert photos of regional leadership in this order):

Partners and Stakeholders

KAM's Nairobi region works closely with key stakeholders, including the Nairobi City County Government, Kenya Power,

Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company, Nairobi Rivers Commission, National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), other business member organizations, and community groups among others.

Advocacy Initiatives

The Nairobi Region's advocacy initiatives focus on matters affecting the manufacturing sector at the county level, such as utility supplies (water and power), environmental sustainability, and infrastructure. In this regard, we continue to engage:

- Nairobi City County Government and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) on policy dialogue to advocate for practical, clear, and business-friendly environmental compliance frameworks. KAM also supports manufacturers on compliance and is at the forefront in engaging the county government on waste collection within the industrial hubs.

Kenya Power on power outages and fluctuations affecting productivity, Time of Use Tariff, power demand management,

power factor and renewable energy. This is through sensitization forums targeting manufacturers and continuous engagements.

- Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC) on enhancing consistent water supply and water quality and sewer management issues within the industrial hubs in Nairobi. Our main area of concern is increasing encroachment on sewer infrastructure which has resulted in blockages which pose a health hazard to both the factories and communities in the industrial areas.
- National government agencies (KURA and KeNHA) and Nairobi County Government on transport, which is a key component of the manufacturing sector. Some of the issues discussed are poor access roads to the industrial hubs and

traffic congestion which lead to delays, thus hampering scheduled production and movement of goods to and from the factory. So far, we have engaged regional directors, and most recently, the Principal Secretary, State Department for Roads, Eng. Joseph Mbugua, to address pressing road-related issues requiring the Department's attention. Also in attendance were representatives from the Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA).

Engagements

- The Kenya-EU EPA Awareness Forum held in January 2025 aimed to equip members with the knowledge and criteria needed to position their businesses to leverage the Kenya - EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).
- Kenya Power sensitization forum in March 2025 to sensitize members on matters power such as the Time of Use tariff, power demand management, power factor and renewable energy.
- Nairobi County sensitization forum to discuss issues raised by members regarding public health and environmental regulations.
- Engagement with the Nairobi County Governor during the Region's 2024 Annual General Meeting, where he outlined the County's plans aligned to manufacturing.

Corporate Social Responsibility

KAM continues to develop and implement social impact efforts and initiatives that bolster its mandate as the credible voice of industry. Through our CSR initiatives, we spearhead the manufacturing sector's wider role in shared prosperity, poverty alleviation, and bridging inequality, thus amplifying our connection with humanity and secure the future of industry.

This year, KAM Nairobi Region held its annual CSR at Ruaraka Police Station. In partnership with RAMCO Group, Flame Tree Group and Superform, KAM donated beds and mattresses for children hosted by the police station, in addition to toys, office seats, and a plastic sentry box.



NCBA PARTNERS WITH KENYA ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS (KAM) TO CHAMPION VALUE CHAIN FINANCING

Over 100 industry leaders from Kenya's manufacturing, financial, and public policy sectors discuss innovative financing to boost industrial competitiveness.

1st August 2025... Nairobi. **NCBA, in partnership with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM)**, has today hosted a CEOs breakfast forum, themed "Unlocking Growth in Manufacturing through Value Chain Financing" in Nairobi.

NCBA Kenya Managing Director James Gossip emphasized on the need to rethink how capital is structured and delivered across Kenya's industrial ecosystem, "Manufacturing currently contributes 7.3 per cent to Kenya's GDP, significantly below the government's 2030 vision target of 20 per cent. This forum underscores our commitment to go beyond banking, to become true enablers of business transformation for manufacturers."

NCBA showcased its financial solutions, including asset leasing, trade finance, and supply chain financing, which support business sustainability and cash flow management for manufacturers. The bank reiterated its commitment to providing tailored, ecosystem-driven solutions that go beyond lending, offering long-term advisory, partnership development and policy alignment support.

"We are working closely with industry associations, aggregators, and off-takers to fund structures that traverse entire value chains. This reduces risks to our customers and ensures that funding leads to measurable growth. We are also actively participating in public-private dialogue to shape policies that improve the ease of doing business and conducting market research to facilitate our clients in making viable decisions." added Mr. James Gossip.

Kenya's manufacturing sector plays a vital role in job creation and economic development, employing over 350,000 people directly and supporting more than 1.6 million indirectly. According to data from KNBS, the sector grew by 2.1% contributing to an overall GDP growth of 4.9% in the first quarter of 2025. Despite its potential, the sector continues to face challenges in limited access to affordable capital, supply chain fragmentation and weak regional competitiveness.

"When we talk about value chain financing, we are talking about ensuring everyone in the chain: from the farmer, aggregator, transporter, to the processor and final manufacturer, is bankable. That means innovative financing products that respond to the cyclical nature of the manufacturing sector," said Tobias Alando, Chief Executive of KAM.

KAM continues to champion such dialogues that bring together the financial sector, industry, and policy players.

"We need affordable and long-term financial instruments that align with production cycles, de-risk investment in primary processing, and support businesses, from SMEs to larger players to expand and stay competitive in both local and global markets." Added Mr. Alando.

The event concluded with a renewed call for greater collaboration among government, financiers, and industry players to create an enabling environment for growth.





Kenya has distinguished herself as one of the leading producers of agricultural and horticultural produce, including tea, coffee, avocados and flowers. However, we are yet to become world leaders in these sectors. How do we carve our niche and dominate global markets through production of exquisite quality produce, and ensuring that we derive maximum value from these products and their value chains?

Conquering global markets calls for forward and backward value chain integration, which will ensure that all stakeholders, from the farmer to the manufacturer and their service providers, as well as government all earn good returns. Attaining full value chain integration calls for sound actions and policy and regulatory support coupled with intentional initiatives to enhance market access. Take packaging of agricultural and horticultural produce, a vital component of the production process, and market access for agricultural and horticultural produce. How can we build the packaging industry and ensure our products are globally competitive?

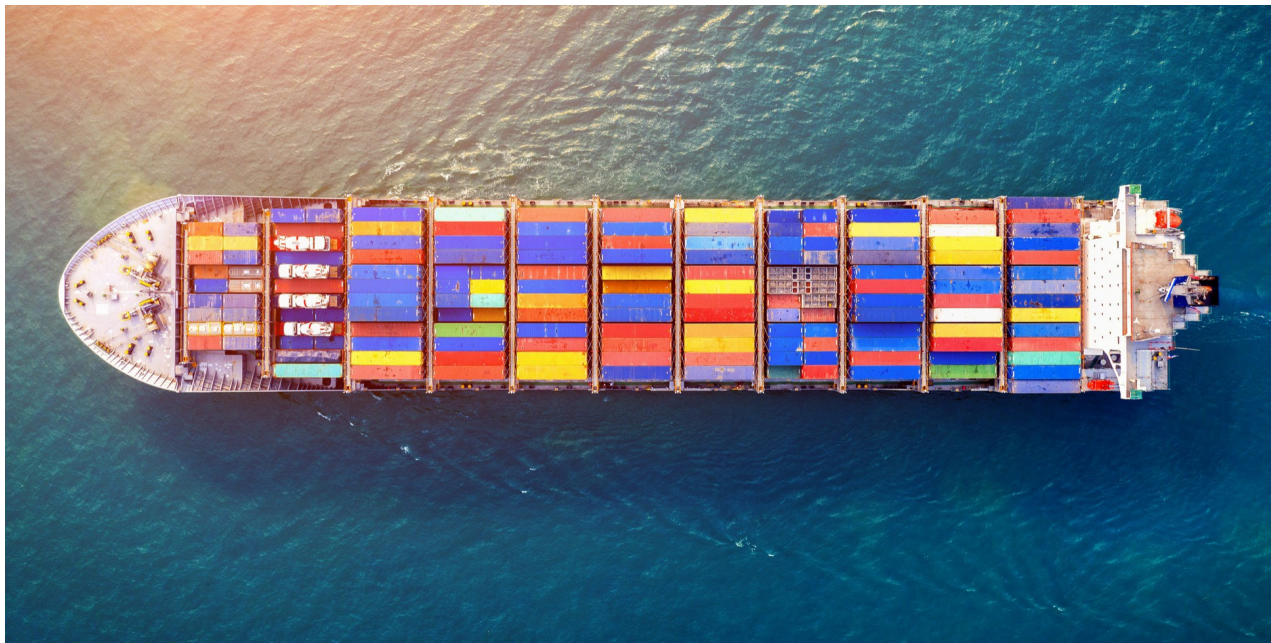
First, we must champion local sourcing by ensuring that inputs used to package our top exports are sourced locally. Kenya has now a well-established packaging manufacturing industry producing world class packaging products for domestic and export markets ranging from paper, plastic, glass and tins, among others. The packaging sector supports export products, for instance, floriculture and horticulture with avocados and flowers growing to become one of our top export products.

However, all good intentions to build and nurture a thriving manufacturing sector in Kenya are deterred by some facets of the

Conquering global markets through forward and backward integration

By Tobias Alando





business environment, which continue to hamper competitiveness and productivity. For instance, in the Finance Act 2025, government introduced excise duty at the rate of Ksh 25% or KSh 50 per kg (whichever is higher) - 50% per kilogram is equivalent to 55% excise duty on kraft paper, a critical raw material used in the manufacture of packaging. Currently, Kenya does not produce kraft paper and relies on imports from various countries, including EAC which caters for 30% of the required volumes, to meet demand. In three years, cumulative tax on kraft paper has increased from less than 50% to 111%, which includes – additional to 55% excise duty, 10% Export and Investment Promotion Levy (EIPL), 25% Import Duty, 16% VAT, 2.5% Import Declaration Fee and 2% Railway Development Levy. This is a lopsided policy that promotes imports rather than locally manufactured packaging. This places Kenya at a competitive disadvantage, because our neighbours in the EAC charge lower taxes.

Kenya will lose her competitiveness compared to competitors such as South American countries (Ecuador, Columbia and Peru) on key export products such as tea, coffee, avocado and flowers. The net effect is reduced demand for agricultural and horticultural produce from Kenya, which includes flowers and avocados and subsequently, a dip in government revenue. To promote local manufacturing, the government should introduce VAT exemption on inputs for the manufacture of packaging bags rather than on finished packaging.

Local sourcing is an effective strategy in today's highly volatile business climate partly characterized by shifting geopolitics

which leads to risks such as supply chain disruptions. Hence, it is important for Government to put in place policies and regulations that encourage the purchase of locally produced goods and promote the Buy Kenya Build Kenya agenda.

Other drivers of increasing Kenya's agricultural and horticultural exports are research and development to ensure that our products are of high value, which will lead to better returns for all players in the value chain. In doing so, we shall also be better positioned to understand global market dynamics and demands as well as implement informed product development standards that are commensurate with various consumers worldwide. A good example of a country that has successfully implemented this is China, a leading exporter of tea, which has heavily invested in research and development for value added tea and production of new products, a sharp contrast with Kenya which mostly exports bulk black tea. Kenya can emulate China and diversify the tea it exports through value addition, innovation and production of a wide variety of tea.

Value chain integration will lead to better controls, pricing, and enhance Kenya's competitive edge in global markets. Moreover, it also increases certainty of access to raw materials supply and improved manufacturing processes for better quality, increased efficiency, and higher profit margins. Kenya must be intentional in the agriculture and horticulture sectors to derive maximum value from her products.

The writer is the Chief Executive of Kenya Association of Manufacturers and can be reached at ceo@kam.co.ke.



Manufacturers unveil eco-labelling plan to cater to eco-conscious consumers

Thursday, 7th August 2025, Nairobi: On supermarket shelves, in online stores, and across various markets, lies a quiet revolution that is reshaping how consumers are choosing the products they buy. The modern-day consumer is eco-conscious, driven not only by price, but by purpose. They want to know how a product was made, what it contains, and whether it aligns with their values and increasingly, they are holding brands accountable.

Today, Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), in partnership with the Danish Industry and the Ministry of Investments, Trade & Industry (MITI), officially launched the Eco-Labelling Guidelines for Kenya's Manufacturing Sector, a timely and forward-looking blueprint for sustainable industrial transformation in Kenya.

Speaking during the launch, Wahome Kinguru, Director of Industries at Ministry of Investment, Trade, and Industry, reiterated the government's commitment to placing sustainability

at the heart of industrial development. He said, "The Government of Kenya is committed to delivering on its climate action commitments under the Paris Agreement, particularly through our updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 32% by 2030. Industry plays a pivotal role in achieving these targets. Through the Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan (GESIP), and regulations such as the

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), we are creating a policy environment that supports responsible production. Eco-labelling is a key enabler in this transition. It not only drives cleaner production and efficient resource use but also opens new market opportunities by demonstrating Kenya's credibility in meeting international sustainability standards. These guidelines provide a critical tool for industries to align with national climate goals while remaining globally competitive."

The Eco-Labelling Guidelines provide practical guidance for manufacturers on how to embed eco-labelling into their product lifecycle, from design and packaging to distribution and disposal. Tobias Alando, Chief Executive at KAM, reflected on how the expectations of consumers are transforming the business landscape. He reiterated that, "Let us not underestimate the changing face of consumption. Consumers are no longer passive. They are engaged. They are reading labels, researching company



values, and rewarding brands that match their environmental values. Today's modern-day consumer is buying into a product's process, a value system, and a story. Increasingly, that story needs to reflect transparency, accountability, and sustainability. Eco-labelling is how we, as manufacturers, can meet them halfway and invite them into a deeper relationship with our brands."

As global regulations continue to evolve, eco-labelling also helps position Kenyan products for export competitiveness, especially within the European Union (EU), where environmental compliance is becoming a non-negotiable requirement. Klaus Lehn Christensen, Danish Industry East Africa Manager, emphasized the strategic value of these guidelines in global trade. He said, "These guidelines present a chance to align your product with international markets through trade agreements such as the Kenya-EU EPA. Today's consumer wants to see not just what you produce, but how you produce it and its impact, especially when it comes to sustainability. In Europe, two major shifts are

happening: tariffs are changing, and sustainability requirements are becoming stricter. As an industry, we acknowledge that our production processes can impact the environment. It is vital that we lead the charge in protecting it and eco-labelling gives us the tools and transparency to do just that."

The global push for climate action is accelerating, and Kenya is stepping up. With new national targets, policy frameworks, and consumer demand all converging, eco-labelling offers a powerful lever for inclusive, green growth. It allows producers to tell authentic stories of sustainability, gain consumer trust, and access high-value markets. And for consumers, it offers clarity and confidence in the products they choose.

In an era where environmental accountability is becoming a brand differentiator, the launch of the Eco-Labelling Guidelines marks a bold step forward for industry, for policy, and for the planet.

Eco-labelling empowers Kenyan industries to build trust, drive sustainability, and compete globally through transparency and purpose.





Group Picture with Company Executives

Kenya's Industry embraces wastewater reuse for climate action

Friday, 25th July 2025, Nairobi: Kenya's industrial sector is taking centre stage in the fight against climate change, as a new report launched today outlines a roadmap to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 32% by 2030.

The Industrial Report on Kenya's Preparedness to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, with a Focus on Wastewater Targets, developed by Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) in partnership with the Confederation of Danish Industry and the Kenya Water Institute, reveals how sustainable wastewater management is a game-changing solution to both emissions reduction and resource efficiency.

The report frames wastewater not as waste, but as a vital, reusable resource aligned with the principles of the circular economy. Speaking at the launch, Principal Secretary in the State Department for Water and Sanitation, Julius Korir, CBS, affirmed the government's commitment to expanding sanitation access. He said, "Access to water has improved significantly from 68% to over 75% in 2025. We have expanded sanitation in major towns like Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu. Our focus now is on emerging towns such as Mandera, Isiolo, Wajir, Chuka, Chogoria, Malindi, Mtwapa, and Kiambu. We are setting up sewer systems to reduce discharge into rivers. These investments are not just about infrastructure but also dignifying the lives of Kenyans and supporting industry. Industries are both users of water and generators, and therefore, a critical part of the solution."



Leiro Letangule Ph.D, EBS.
Chief Executive Officer
Kenya Water Institute

Tobias Alando, Chief Executive at Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), emphasized that the private sector is not waiting to be told what to do. He reiterated that, “As Kenya Association of Manufacturers, we believe industry is not a passive observer in climate action, we are key actors. Many of our industries have already taken bold steps. From recycling greywater in production plants, to installing on-site treatment facilities and exploring biogas generation from effluent sludge, the private sector is already innovating. We are also seeing industrial parks experimenting with zero liquid discharge systems, textile companies treating and reusing dye water, and food processors tapping into circular economy models. But we are also honest: we know there is more to do. We need a more enabling policy environment, easier access to green financing, and capacity-building to bring SMEs into this journey.”

He also spelled out key recommendations from the report that are essential for scaling up industry-wide action. These include strengthening policy enforcement, investing in wastewater infrastructure, enabling public-private partnerships (PPPs), building technical capacity, supporting local innovation, adopting circular economy approaches, and leveraging real-time data systems for transparency and accountability.

Dr. Leiro Letangule, Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Water



Institute, highlighted the potential of wastewater as an untapped resource in climate adaptation. He said, “This report is a roadmap that shows how wastewater can be transformed into a resource, in alignment with circularity principles. It also shows us the economic and environmental benefits of repurposing, recycling, and reusing water. Promotion of water-saving technologies could be exactly what we need. Investing in climate-smart technologies is not optional, it is essential.”

From the perspective of international partnership, Millicent Kariuki, Manager for TVET at Danish Industry East Africa, emphasized the need to move from policy to practice. She said, “From this study, it is clear that Kenya has enough policies and frameworks. The real question is: how are we implementing them? A clear implementation roadmap is a necessity; both from the public and private sectors, and we must set realistic goals. If we are to move our emission rate to 32%, we must also improve access to resources. Addressing climate change is not about new promises, it is about coordinated action.”

As Kenya advances toward its 2030 target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 32%, the path forward lies in reimagining wastewater as a driver of resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability. With bold implementation, coordinated partnerships, and unwavering commitment from both public and private sectors, Kenya's industry can lead the way, not just in cutting emissions, but in building a circular economy that works for people, planet, and profit.



Embrace sustainable trade partnerships, manufacturers urged

5th Edition of Changamka Shopping Festival Mombasa kicks off

Thursday, 10th July 2025: Embrace sustainable trade to enhance your competitiveness, manufacturers have been told. This was during the opening ceremony of the 5th Edition of the Changamka Shopping Festival in Mombasa, themed, Driving Kenya's Manufacturing Competitiveness through Sustainable Trade Partnerships.

Speaking during the ceremony, the Governor, County Government of Mombasa, His Excellency Abdullswamad Shariff Nassir, called for enhanced collaboration between relevant stakeholders to enhance manufacturing competitiveness, "The manufacturing sector is currently facing unprecedented challenges, including reducing market access attributed to global geopolitics. We recognize that collaborative efforts between government, industry, and development partners are essential for driving sustainable growth and addressing challenges in the manufacturing sector. As the County Government of Mombasa, we appreciate that stability and predictability are necessary prerequisites for any investor. We are taking deliberate actions to transform Mombasa into a favorable investment destination and part of this entails infrastructural development and sustainable waste management.

KAM Coast Region Chairman, Abdallah Athman, highlighted the manufacturing sector's immense potential to tap into sustainable trade partnerships, and called for strengthening of the manufacturing sector.

"Driving the local manufacturing sector's growth calls for deliberate actions to strengthen local industries, enhance competitiveness, and create a more predictable business environment. This means promoting initiatives such as the Buy Kenya, Build Kenya campaign

to boost local consumption and support local industries; identifying and addressing challenges including rising operational costs and limited market access; encouraging research and development, and fostering innovation. Let us learn from countries with successful manufacturing sectors, like Vietnam and China, which provide valuable insights and best practices Kenya can emulate. Additionally, maximize the benefits of existing trade agreements, such as AfCFTA to expand our market access, explore new markets and diversify export destinations. This way, we can reduce our reliance on traditional markets and mitigate risks," explained Mr Abdallah.

KAM Chief Executive, Tobias Alando noted that Kenya's success in trade is pegged on how well-prepared industry is and called on the local manufacturing sector to use the domestic market as a launching pad into external markets.

"Increasing our global market presence will enhance our competitiveness and open new opportunities for our manufacturers. It is our goal to ensure that the "Made in Kenya" label is not only recognized but also embodied with pride locally and internationally. Let us build a thriving domestic trade ecosystem is the foundation for a successful external trade strategy,"

The Changamka Shopping Festival Mombasa runs from 10th-13th July 2025 and brings together over 65 exhibitors and is sponsored by NCBA, Smart Expo, Stanbic Bank and Mombasa County Government. The Nairobi edition will be held on 4th-8th November at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC).

MANUFACTURERS SPORTS DAY





20TH KAIZEN CONGRESS EAST AFRICA





The new age of business certification

By Lydia Kariuki

In today's competitive global market, meeting standards and complying with regulations is no longer optional, it is a business imperative. Customers are becoming more discerning, demanding not only authentic products and services but also transparency, consistency, and value for money. They want to know that what they are buying is safe, sustainable, and built to last.

This growing demand for quality assurance and trust has reshaped how businesses operate. This is not only happening in manufacturing but across every sector. At the same time, industries are evolving. Technologies are smarter. Operations are becoming more agile. And expectations are higher than ever.

At Global Standards Certification (GSC) Ltd, we have seen this shift firsthand. That is why we are stepping in to support businesses that want to do things right. We help companies build robust systems, meet international

standards, and earn the trust that keeps customers coming back.

Whether you are a start-up, SME, or established enterprise, navigating the world of compliance can be overwhelming. That is where we come in, offering smart solutions that are not only compliant but also efficient and future focused.

We work alongside businesses to provide tailored auditing services that go beyond ticking boxes. Internal audits are no longer just a regulatory requirement; they have become powerful tools for operational improvement. GSC brings independence, expertise, and rigor to these processes, ensuring that audit outcomes aren't just reports, but roadmaps for growth.

“

Our approach is collaborative, helping businesses build systems that scale not just about meeting today's standards, but also prepare for tomorrow's challenges.

”

Supplier audits are also crucial in ensuring consistency across the value chain. With GSC's experienced professionals, businesses gain both assurance and valuable recommendations to improve supplier performance and reduce risks.

When certification is required, we offer the credibility that matters. As an accredited body under the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS), GSC provides ISO 9001 and ISO 22000 certification, evidence that a business meets globally recognized quality and food safety standards. We are also approved to certify under GlobalG.A.P and LocalG.A.P schemes, helping businesses expand into new markets and instilling confidence in their customers.

But smart industries do not stop at certification, they invest in capability. That is why GSC places a strong emphasis on training. Our trainers are seasoned professionals who understand the dynamic landscape of standards and industry requirements. We create training programs around key areas such as ISO standards (including ISO 9001, ISO 22000, ISO 14001), food safety, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), emergency preparedness, customer service, and even soft skills like self-branding. These programs equip teams to not only meet standards but also innovate within them.





The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) is marking its 60th anniversary with a bold declaration of reinvention. What began in 1965 as a modest provident fund for urban workers is today a half-trillion-shilling giant that anchors the retirement hopes of more than three million Kenyans.

For years, the Fund was dogged by mistrust, inefficiency, and accusations of corruption. Today, its leadership confidently says those days are gone. “This milestone is not just about how far we have come,” says David Koros, NSSF’s Managing Trustee. “It is about reaffirming our commitment to secure the future of every Kenyan worker with integrity, innovation, and inclusivity.”

Few institutions in Kenya can boast of such dramatic transformation. In just three years, member contributions have risen nearly five-fold — from KSh26.8 billion in 2022 to KSh83.9 billion in 2025. The Fund’s value has surged 84 percent, from KSh312 billion to KSh575 billion, putting NSSF firmly on the path to reach the trillion-shilling mark by 2028.

Equally significant is how efficiently this money is managed. The cost-to-assets ratio has dropped from 2.4 percent in 2022 to 1.47 percent in 2025, well within global benchmarks and the 1.5 percent cap set by law. For members, this translates into more money being invested on their behalf and less swallowed by bureaucracy.

Perhaps the most striking achievement is in service delivery. Where members once waited nearly three months for their benefits, today

NSSF at 60

From modest fund to trillion-Shilling powerhouse

the average processing time is just 10 working days, with a promise to reduce this to 24 hours within the next year. In the past two years alone, over 200,000 Kenyans have received their payouts.

And for the millions saving for retirement, the promise of value is clearer than ever. Interest credited to members has jumped from a modest 4 percent in 2022 to 11 percent in 2025 — a 175 percent increase that not only beats inflation but restores confidence that pensions will deliver dignity in old age.

From Bureaucracy to Digital Service

Technology has been the enabler of this turnaround. Today, workers check balances and file claims on mobile phones through USSD codes and WhatsApp bots, while integrated bank systems and electronic document management slash delays and red tape.

“We know we must meet young people where they are, on their phones, online, and on demand,” Koros says. “By digitising our systems, we have turned what used to be a slow, paper-driven bureaucracy into a modern service provider.”

The shift is not just about convenience. For a generation that grew up on M-Pesa, the ability to interact with NSSF in real time helps rebuild trust in an institution once dismissed as opaque.

Inclusion for the Informal Worker

The future of NSSF lies in reaching beyond salaried employees into Kenya’s vast informal economy. Millions of boda boda riders, traders, artisans, and gig workers have historically been excluded from pensions. That changed in 2019 with the launch of Haba Haba, a micro-pension scheme allowing contributions as low as KSh25 a day, with flexible withdrawals after five years.

Registration, payment, and account validation can all be done via mobile phones, ensuring the scheme speaks directly to the needs of hustlers and small business owners. By doing so, NSSF has positioned itself as a partner in the government’s Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, which seeks to make financial inclusion the foundation of national growth.

Investing in Kenya's Future

NSSF's Sh500 billion portfolio makes it a heavyweight in the country's capital markets, with a dual responsibility: to deliver solid returns for members while supporting Kenya's development. Investments have been diversified into infrastructure, real estate, and equities, guided by strict regulation from the Retirement Benefits Authority.

"We are custodians of workers' futures," Koros explains. "That means not only delivering double-digit returns but also investing in ways that support the wider economy. When we invest in infrastructure, we are helping build the Kenya where our members will live and retire."

Rebuilding Trust

Governance remains the bedrock of this transformation. The NSSF Act 2013 introduced strong checks and balances, while digitised procurement, ISO certifications, and performance contracts have tightened accountability. Independent oversight by the Auditor General, the Treasury, and the Retirement Benefits Authority has further strengthened transparency.

Unqualified audit reports, once unthinkable for the then scandal-prone Fund, now serve as proof of a cultural shift. "Transparency is not optional," says Koros. "It is the only way to build and sustain the trust of our members."

As it celebrates its diamond jubilee, NSSF stands not only as a custodian of workers' savings but as a symbol of resilience and reinvention. From a KSh312 billion fund three years ago to a projected trillion-shilling giant by 2028, its trajectory is one of bold ambition and newfound trust.

But beyond the balance sheets, the Fund's real measure of success lies in the lives it touches: the elderly trader in Kisumu, the retired teacher in Nyeri, the gig worker in Nairobi. Each now has reason to believe that a lifetime of toil will not end in despair.

Koros sums up the journey simply: "We thank our members for their trust. NSSF will remain your partner in building a dignified retirement. This is not just about savings, it is about securing futures, uplifting families, and strengthening the fabric of our nation."



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How WYLDE International is redefining consulting in the age of smart industries

By Mashary Keya

It was a Thursday evening in early July 2025. I was at the Nairobi Serena Hotel for the KAM Sundowner, an event rich with insights on supply chains, scaling operations, and enterprise software. Odoo was the host that evening, and as they took us through how their platform supports manufacturers to work smarter through automating inventory, syncing sales and forecasting demand, something clicked.

Their case study of a bicycle manufacturer was more than a tech demo. It was a sign of the times. Businesses are hungry for smarter ways of working. And that hunger does not end at the factory. It stretches across industries, consulting included.

For those of us in the business advisory space, we are also navigating a wave of disruption. PowerPoint decks and Excel sheets may have defined the 2010s, but today they no longer suffice. Clients want more: not just insights, but outcomes. Not just reports, but solutions. They ask for real-time dashboards, diagnostics that flag inefficiencies, learning engines that upskill their teams, and digital systems that drive continuous innovation.

Consulting is being redefined. And at WYLDE International, we are embracing that transformation with both hands.

We are witnessing a shift. Strategy decks have evolved into live dashboards. Evaluations are scored using smart algorithms. Workshops now live inside digital learning platforms. AI is no longer a future concept; it is a present tool. Research, once

manual and time-intensive, is increasingly automated. And the expectations? They have risen. Clients do not just want advice anymore, they want systems that solve, scale, and sustain.

At WYLDE, we are committed to this new standard. We have traded static tools for dynamic platforms. Our consulting teams plan, execute, and monitor outcomes using smart technologies that deliver visibility and speed.

One area where this transformation has been especially impactful is program management, long known for its manual processes and sprawling spreadsheets. To streamline this, we implemented Accubate, a sophisticated platform that digitizes every aspect of program delivery.

Within just three weeks, we moved an entire entrepreneurship support program, the Aiducation International Start-Up Fund, from a paper-based system to a fully digital one. What used to take weeks now takes hours.

Every touchpoint in the program is now automated and connected. These include:

- Dashboards track application status, milestones, and pending actions in real time.
- Evaluation processes are simplified with scoring algorithms that reduce bias.

- Participants get personalized onboarding journeys and access to learning libraries with curated videos, playbooks, and modules.
- Milestones like revenue targets, job creation, and fundraising are tracked live for real-time reporting.
- And most importantly, fund disbursement is tied to actual milestone completion, backed by digital documentation.

This was a full transformation; faster, smarter, more efficient. And it didn't stop there. When faced with the challenge of producing high-quality training videos for a youth entrepreneurship project, within a tight budget and tighter deadline, we turned to Synthesia AI. With it, we produced immersive, instructor-led video content at a fraction of the cost. From playbooks to interactive learning modules, everything was converted into dynamic digital learning. The result? Faster content production, reduced costs, and scalable training materials that can be reused again and again.

We also use AI as a research assistant scanning industry trends,

mapping customer needs, and helping shape smarter strategies for our clients. For us, AI isn't a buzzword. It's a workhorse.

But the true impact of smart consulting is in how we empower our clients to get smarter too.

Whether it is identifying automation opportunities, designing AI use cases, streamlining internal processes, or improving data visibility through real-time dashboards, our mission remains the same: to help businesses think smarter, build faster, and scale sustainably. From local SMEs to multinationals, the demand is consistent: Better insights. Faster systems. Less friction. That is where we come in.

We are in a new era, one where advice alone is no longer enough. Smart industries need smart consultants. Today's consulting firm must think like a strategist and build like an engineer. That is the role continue to embrace at WYLDE.

We are offering more than guidance as we are delivering platforms, insights, and automation that help businesses become leaner, more agile, and more resilient in a rapidly evolving market. The real question is not whether your business will adapt to this new reality. The real question is: How fast can you move?

The writer is the Business Advisor at WYLDE International.

Smart consulting isn't just about advice but rather about building systems that think, scale, and sustain.





How Automation Is Transforming Manufacturing in East Africa

By Peter Kamau

Automation has moved far beyond being a buzzword. For manufacturers across East Africa, it has become a business-critical tool for improving efficiency, reducing operational costs, and staying competitive in a fast-changing global economy. But the way we adopt and deploy automation here, in our own industrial context, requires a deeper understanding of both the opportunities and the challenges that define our region.

Having worked across manufacturing, electrical distribution, and project execution over the past decade, I have seen firsthand how automation has evolved from a niche investment to a strategic priority. Today, with the rise of AI, IoT, and software-led decision-making, East African industries are beginning to unlock new possibilities, many of which are long overdue.

Globally, manufacturing is being reshaped by a range of forces: growing energy demand, rising costs, increased pressure for operational efficiency, and a workforce that is becoming harder to train and retain. East African manufacturers face these same pressures, in many ways, even more intensely. High energy costs, small market sizes, and infrastructure gaps make efficiency not just a goal, but a survival strategy.

Historically, many factories in our region were built with a focus on basic functionality. Once the production line was operational, further investment often ceased. However, that model is rapidly becoming outdated. Today, there is a growing demand for industry-specific software that goes beyond simple automation. Such tools can enhance agility, improve visibility, and empower businesses to make faster, smarter decisions.

One of the most promising developments is the role of software in empowering the workforce. With a shortage of highly qualified technicians in many countries and the growing shift toward remote work, digital tools now make it possible for experts outside the region to connect with local facilities and provide real-time support. That level of flexibility was unimaginable just a few years ago, but now, it is increasingly becoming the norm.

Across East Africa, manufacturers are contending with challenges that reach far beyond the factory floor. Volatile commodity prices, high interest rates, and ongoing regulatory uncertainty have all taken a toll on operations and long-term planning. Compounding these issues, many manufacturing facilities continue to rely on aging infrastructure. In some cases, equipment and systems that

are decades old; making it even harder to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global market.

Automation is not a silver bullet, but it is making a measurable impact across these areas. For example, digital twin technology enables companies to simulate and troubleshoot production issues in a virtual environment before implementing solutions on the physical line. This approach not only reduces downtime but also significantly lowers the cost associated with trial-and-error decision-making.

We have also seen how virtual reality is being used for training in environments such as welding workshops. Instead of repeatedly using costly materials for practice, technicians can now train in immersive virtual settings that allow them to refine their skills more quickly and efficiently. This is especially valuable in industries where skill transfer and training costs are significant concerns.

Analytics and AI-driven insights are also empowering leaders to make more informed decisions. In a manufacturing facility, data is often scattered across various machines and systems, making real-time integration a significant challenge in the past. Today, smart algorithms and interactive dashboards bring together the most relevant data points, enabling decision-makers to reduce costs, identify bottlenecks, and improve throughput, all without needing to be physically on-site.

One of the most urgent issues in African manufacturing and particularly in Kenya, is the high cost of energy. Among East African Community (EAC) member states, Kenya consistently records some of the highest electricity tariffs for industrial consumers. While countries like Uganda and Tanzania offer relatively lower rates, Kenyan manufacturers often pay significantly more per kilowatt-hour, making it difficult to remain competitive. For energy-intensive industries, this pricing disparity directly affects production costs, profit margins, and long-term sustainability.

Automation is playing a critical role in addressing this challenge by giving manufacturers the ability to monitor, predict, and manage energy usage in ways that were previously out of reach. Sometimes, it's as simple as shutting off machines when they are idle, a decision that used to depend entirely on the attention of a human operator. With automation, these actions can now be made automatically and in real time. Advanced software can also optimize maintenance schedules by predicting when a component is likely to fail, allowing teams to plan ahead rather than reacting to sudden breakdowns. This kind of foresight saves energy, reduces waste, and improves equipment uptime.

Motors, which account for up to 60 percent of energy use in manufacturing environments, are another critical area of focus. With

the help of automation and variable speed drives, manufacturers can now tailor power usage based on real-time load conditions, rather than applying full force to every task. The result is less energy wasted, fewer mechanical slowdowns, and a more cost-effective operation overall.

Looking ahead, automation is poised to become more accessible, more affordable, and more widespread across the region. Several factors are driving this shift.

First, information is now more readily available. Technicians and engineers can access online resources, upskill themselves, and even become certified system integrators. This growing local talent pool is accelerating the adoption of digital tools and fostering innovation from within.

Second, software solutions have become significantly more cost-effective. Companies like Schneider Electric are developing automation technologies specifically tailored for smaller manufacturers, meaning businesses no longer need massive budgets or large-scale infrastructure to get started. The tools are simpler to implement, and the return on investment is easier to track.

We are also seeing a growing appetite among manufacturers to better understand these technologies, even if they haven't adopted them yet. They're asking the right questions. They want to know how software can make them more agile, more efficient, and more resilient in an increasingly competitive environment.

If you are starting your automation journey, the most important thing you can do is gather accurate information and ensure that your chosen solution fits your specific needs. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Too often, we have seen companies jump onto a software trend without clearly identifying the value it is meant to deliver. They invest in the right technology for the wrong reasons and then wonder why it fails to perform.

Start with clarity. What problems are you trying to solve? What outcomes are you aiming for? Once those are defined, work with a trusted partner who can align the right tools to your goals. The automation journey does not need to be complicated; it just needs to be intentional.

The writer is the Industry Business Leader – East Africa, Schneider Electric.

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