

Operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM)- Support to the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) Project

Report of the outcomes of the 4th Project Steering Committee

9.02.2026

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Project:	Operationalisation of the SAATM – Support to AFCAC
Co-Chairs:	African Union Commission (AUC) and European Union Delegation to the African Union (EU DEL)
Implementing Partner: European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)	

1. Background

The 4th Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting of the EU-funded project Operationalisation of the SAATM – Support to AFCAC was held online on 29 January 2026, under the co-chairmanship of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Union Delegation to the African Union (EU DEL).

The PSC brought together representatives of the AUC, AFCAC, the EU Delegation to the AU, EASA, the European Commission (DG MOVE, E2), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Safety Oversight Organisations (RSOs), industry stakeholders (ACI Africa, AFRAA) and international financial institutions (WB, AfDB).

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- review the implementation of project activities in 2025;
- take note of the results achieved under the three contractual Results;
- present and discuss the findings of the key studies delivered in 2025;
- present the proposed Work Plan for 2026; and
- provide strategic guidance for the final phase of project implementation.

The meeting took place in a positive and constructive context, marked by the acceleration of implementation observed in 2025, strengthened institutional cooperation among partners, and the recent approval of the project extension until August 2026.

The PSC also took place in a strengthened political context, with SAATM being explicitly referenced as a political priority in the declaration of the EU–AU Summit held in Angola in November 2025. This reinforces the strategic visibility of SAATM within the broader EU–Africa partnership framework and underlines its complementarity with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

2. Main outcomes

The PSC:

- Took note of the 2025 activities without objection;
- Endorsed the Work Plan 2026;
- Welcomed the expert studies on Aviation Taxes & Charges and Aviation Competition.

Members acknowledged the transition of the project from an initial institutional consolidation phase to a more mature, implementation-oriented phase, characterized by strengthened ownership, improved coordination and increased delivery capacity.

3. Implementation Progress in 2025

Activities implemented in 2025 focused on:

Institutional strengthening:

Support to the Dispute Settlement Mechanism, reinforcement of aviation data and analytical capacity (including APAD), completion of the Taxes & Charges and Competition studies, SBAS Phase 2 delivery and continued coordination under JPAP.

Regulatory convergence and market integration:

Competition and consumer protection training, legal harmonization workshops, data capacity building and engagement on sustainability topics, including SAF.

Stakeholder engagement:

Structured engagement with airlines and airports, high-level advocacy activities and cross-cutting support to SAATM implementation.

Expert Studies

The PSC welcomed the presentation of the expert studies on:

- Aviation Taxes, Charges and Fees; and
- Aviation Market Competition.

The PSC acknowledged the analytical value of the studies and their contribution to evidence-based policy discussions at continental and regional level.

4. Work Plan 2026

The PSC endorsed the proposed Work Plan 2026, recognizing its alignment with AFCAC priorities and JPAP objectives.

Members noted the ambitious scope of the programme and stressed the importance of prioritization and realistic sequencing considering budgetary constraints and the limited timeframe remaining

under the project (7 months). The need to regroup and streamline certain activities to ensure quality and feasibility was highlighted.

Industry representatives from ACI Africa and AFRAA emphasized the importance of translating policy discussions into practical implementation support for airlines and airports.

Particular attention was given to the need for improved coordination of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) initiatives across the continent. Given the multiplicity of actors and programmes active in this field, enhanced alignment and information-sharing were considered essential to maximize impact and avoid duplication.

5. Strategic and Governance Developments

AFCAC presented proposals to strengthen JPAP governance and monitoring mechanisms, aimed at improving accountability, political oversight and structured performance tracking. The PSC supported these efforts.

AFCAC also outlined its 2026 strategic priorities, including connectivity, reduction of aviation taxes and charges, data capability, sustainability integration and enhanced global advocacy. The PSC noted the coherence between these priorities and the project's activities.

Performance indicators presented during the meeting showed measurable progress in market opening:

- Intra-African connectivity increased to 23% (from 14.5% in 2018);
- 114 new routes launched between 2022 and 2025, including 19 fifth-freedom routes;
- Approximately 3 million additional passengers facilitated;
- Estimated USD 2.8 billion in trade value supported;
- More than 4,200 jobs generated.

Regional initiatives such as the ECOWAS reduction of certain charges and the Banjul Accord group's single market approach were highlighted as examples of progressive integration.

6. Conclusion

The 4thPSC confirmed the sound implementation of the project and endorsed continuation of activities under the 2026 Work Plan.

The discussions underlined the strategic relevance of SAATM within the EU–AU partnership, the importance of strengthened governance and coordination, and the need for realistic prioritization to ensure effective delivery during the final phase of implementation.