



THE COMESA COURT OF JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2030

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2026-2030



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Acronyms

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
ALLPI	Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute
AU	African Union
AUDSM	African Union Dispute Settlement Mechanism
CCC	COMESA Competition Commission
CCDEMS	COMESA Court Digital Evidence Management System
CCJ	COMESA Court of Justice
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DSM	Dispute Settlement Mechanism
EACJ	East African Court of Justice
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EU	European Union
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MSs	Member States
NTBs	Non-Tariff Barriers
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations)
SG	Secretary General (of COMESA Secretariat)
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WTO DSM	World Trade Organization's Dispute Settlement Mechanism

The COMESA Court of Justice (CCJ) serves as the judicial cornerstone of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, playing a pivotal role in upholding the rule of law and ensuring consistent interpretation and application of the COMESA Treaty. The Court's Strategic Plans are firmly aligned with COMESA's vision of accelerating economic integration, as well as continental and global development frameworks including the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Building on the achievements and lessons of the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan such as the successful digitalization of court operations, virtual hearings, and enhanced case management, the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan introduces a transformative shift: a comprehensive review of the Court's jurisdictional mandate. This review anchors the CCJ explicitly within COMESA's four pillars of integration namely *Market Integration, Physical Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender/Social Integration* to deepen regional integration through trade, investment, and policy harmonization.

This evolution is both timely and necessary. As COMESA Member States implement their commitments under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), the Court's jurisdiction can no longer be limited to disputes within COMESA's geographical boundaries. Increasingly, cross-border legal conflicts may involve non-COMESA states, private actors, and novel issues such as climate-related trade measures, digital commerce, intellectual property, competition policy, and geopolitical instability, all of which are emerging as significant sources of regional disputes. To remain a credible and an effective forum, the CCJ must anticipate and proactively adapt its legal frameworks, institutional capacity, and operational models to these evolving realities of this new economic architecture.

A cornerstone of this adaptation is the planned review of the Court's legal instruments, drawing on the dispute settlement mechanisms (DSMs) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and AfCFTA, while benchmarking against international best practices to enhance access to justice and dispute resolution efficiency. This effort will be reinforced through a tripartite partnership protocol among the CCJ, the COMESA Secretariat, and Member States to ensure coordinated compliance with regional, continental, and global legal commitments.

In recognition of this dynamic operational environment, the CCJ has refined its Vision to:

"A world-class court promoting regional integration responsive to changes in the operational environment."

This updated vision underscores the Court's commitment to agility, strategic foresight, and relevance while retaining its core Mission and foundational values of Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Accessibility, Adaptability, and Accountability.

The 2026–2030 Strategic Plan is designed to consolidate the CCJ's role as a pillar of regional legal governance. It directly addresses persistent challenges including resource constraints, low visibility, and jurisdictional ambiguities through six strategic priorities:

- I. Improving Responsiveness to the Operational Environment,
- II. Enhancing the Dispensation of Justice,
- III. Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building,
- IV. Streamlining Court Operations,

V. Enhancing Visibility and Stakeholder Engagement, and

VI. Deepening ICT Integration and Digital Transformation.

Guided by its core values of Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Accessibility, Adaptability, and Accountability, the CCJ will pursue this Strategic Plan through a results-based implementation framework, detailed in a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation matrix that links annual plans and targets to resource requirements and expected outputs. This will be supported by diversified resource mobilization and robust oversight. The successful execution of this plan will solidify the Court's role as a credible, resilient, and indispensable judicial institution in Africa's present and future integration architecture.

PART I:

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Overview

The COMESA Court of Justice (CCJ), established in 1994 under Article 7 of the COMESA Treaty, serves as the judicial cornerstone of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. Tasked with upholding the rule of law, the Court ensures the uniform interpretation and application of the Treaty across its 21 Member States, fostering compliance with regional commitments. Inheriting the jurisdiction of its predecessor bodies, the PTA Tribunal and PTA Administrative Appeals Board, the CCJ adjudicates disputes under Article 23(1) of the Treaty, spanning matters between Member States, COMESA organs, and private stakeholders. Its mandate extends to issuing Advisory Opinions on legal questions, cementing its role as the guardian of COMESA's legal order.

Mandate and Independence

The CCJ operates with institutional and financial autonomy, insulated from political interference by Articles 8(3) and 9(2)(c) of the Treaty, which exempt it from binding directives of COMESA's Authority and Council. Article 42 further guarantees fiscal independence, empowering the Court to manage its own budget. This autonomy ensures impartiality in resolving disputes critical to regional integration, from trade disagreements to challenges against Council decisions. To maintain relevance, the Court periodically revises its vision, mission, and operational frameworks, aligning them with evolving regional priorities and global legal trends.

Jurisdiction in a Dynamic Regional Landscape

The Court's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan aligns with COMESA's vision of accelerating economic integration while contributing to the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By anchoring its work across COMESA's four pillars namely Market Integration, Physical Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender/Social Integration, the CCJ addresses a new generation of challenges, from climate change and digital trade to intellectual property disputes and the cross-border commercial impacts of geopolitical uncertainty. These issues, central to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), position the Court to resolve cross-border conflicts arising from Africa's evolving economic architecture.

Composition and Adaptability

Comprising twelve Judges across First Instance and Appellate Divisions, the CCJ blends judicial expertise with administrative efficiency under the leadership of a Registrar-CEO. Despite political instability necessitating its temporary relocation from Khartoum to Lusaka in 2024, the Court has sustained operations through five-year strategic plans. The outgoing 2021–2025 Strategic Plan prioritized justice delivery, institutional capacity, and digital transformation, achieving milestones such as procedural rule revisions and staff training. However, challenges persist, including low case intake and limited public awareness, prompting a reimagined Strategic Plan for 2026–2030.

1.2 The Link between CCJ and COMESA

COMESA's mandate of deepening regional integration through trade, investment, and policy harmonization is inseparable from the CCJ's role in enforcing legal compliance. As one of the eight AU-recognized

Regional Economic Communities (RECs), COMESA forms a building bloc for the AfCFTA, necessitating institutional synergies between the Court and continental frameworks. The CCJ's jurisprudence not only interprets COMESA Treaty but also bridges gaps in the AfCFTA's state-centric dispute mechanism by offering a forum for private entities and individuals. Any changes to the Treaty provisions must be taken through Council to adjudicate and approve. Thus, Treaty amendments proposed in this strategy are deemed to be taken through the laid down COMESA governance processes.

Evolution of COMESA

From its origins in the 1978 Preferential Trade Area (PTA) to the 1994 COMESA Treaty and the 2000 Free Trade Area (FTA), COMESA has grown into a bloc of 583 million people, boasting a combined GDP of USD 1 trillion in 2024 (Accounting for nearly one-third of Africa's total GDP), and intra-regional trade exceeding USD 14 billion and extra-regional trade exceeding USD 524 billion. Its institutions, such as the COMESA Competition Commission and Trade and Development Bank, drive integration, while the CCJ ensures legal coherence. By institutionalizing multi-REC legal frameworks, the Court supports COMESA's transition into a unified market under the AfCFTA, addressing jurisdictional overlaps and harmonizing trade regimes.

Strategic Alignment with AfCFTA and Global Agendas

The CCJ's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan integrates AfCFTA and TFTA protocols and the best global practices, while leveraging the World Trade Organization's Dispute Settlement Mechanism (WTO DSM) to enhance its credibility. As climate litigation and e-commerce disputes rise, the Court is recalibrating its mandate to include emerging legal fields, ensuring COMESA remains competitive in a digitalized global economy. This proactive stance not only strengthens regional rule of law but also unlocks funding opportunities from partners invested in Africa's sustainable development.

1.2.1 COMESA Fundamental Principles

Guided by Article 6 of the Treaty, COMESA's foundational principles emphasize equality among Member States, collective self-reliance, and peaceful dispute resolution. These include commitments to human rights, democratic governance, and economic justice, ensuring integration efforts prioritize inclusivity and accountability. The CCJ operationalizes these principles by adjudicating disputes transparently and safeguarding the rights of individuals and businesses across hybrid legal systems. In attaining that goal, COMESA Member States agreed to adhere to the following fundamental principles enshrined in Article 6 of the Treaty:

- i) Equality and inter-independence of Member States.
- ii) Solidarity and collective self-reliance among Members States.
- iii) Inter-State co-operation, harmonization of policies and integration of programs among the Members States.
- iv) Non-aggression between Members States.
- v) Recognition, promotion and protection of human and people's rights in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

- vi) Accountability, economic justice, and popular participation in development.
- vii) The recognition and observance of the rule of law.
- viii) The promotion and sustenance of a democratic system of governance in each Member State.
- ix) The maintenance of regional peace and stability through the promotion and strengthening of good neighbourliness; and
- x) The peaceful settlement of disputes among the Member States, the active co-operation between neighbouring countries and the promotion of a peaceful environment as a pre-requisite for their economic development.

1.2.2 COMESA Vision and Mission

COMESA's vision of becoming a "fully integrated, internationally competitive regional economic community" is advanced through its mission of achieving sustainable progress via cooperation in trade, infrastructure, and gender equality. The CCJ aligns with this mission by resolving barriers to integration, such as tariff and non-tariff trade disputes, while promoting equitable access to justice for marginalized groups, including women and small-scale farmers. However, the Court's operations in the present dispensation are limited to COMESA REC geographical boundaries. This calls for realignment with the expanded continental integration initiatives under Agenda 2063.

1.2.3 COMESA Institutions and Specialised Agencies

Collaboration between COMESA and its institutions and specialized agencies is essential pursuant to Article 175 of the COMESA Treaty to deliver on its agenda and the prioritized programmes. A network of 14 specialized agencies supports COMESA's integration agenda. A number of these institutions have internationalized their instruments. The CCJ collaborates with these bodies to enforce rulings, harmonize policies, and address systemic challenges, such as trade facilitation under the Regional Customs Transit Guarantee Scheme. These institutions and agencies include:

- i) **Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI);** To facilitate the development of the leather sector in Africa in general and in the COMESA Region in particular.
- ii) **African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI);** To provide political risk cover to companies, investors, and lenders interested in doing business in Africa.
- iii) **Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA);** To integrate small-scale farmers into national, regional, and international markets through enhanced policy environment, expanded market services and improved commercial integration.
- iv) **COMESA Business Council (CBC);** To enforce strategic advocacy platforms for the private sector in priority sectors within COMESA region and ensure effective representation of private sector interests in COMESA decision making processes.
- v) **COMESA Clearing House;** To facilitate the settlement of trade and services payments amongst Member States.

- vi) **COMESA Competition Commission (CCC);** To promote and encourage competition by preventing restrictive business practices and other restrictions that deter the efficient operation of markets, thereby enhancing the welfare of the consumers in the Common Market and protecting consumers against offensive conduct by market actors.
- vii) **COMESA Council of Bureau on the Yellow Card Scheme;** To facilitate the movement of vehicles, goods, people, and services within the COMESA region.
- viii) **COMESA Federation of Women in Business (COMFWB);** To support women in business in the region
- ix) **COMESA Monetary Institute;** To undertake all technical and preparatory activities required to enhance the COMESA Monetary Cooperation Program.
- x) **COMESA Regional Investment Agency (RIA);** To make COMESA one of the major destinations for regional and international investors while simultaneously enhancing national investment.
- xi) **Regional Customs Transit Guarantee Scheme;** To provide customs administrations with security to recover duties and taxes from importers and exporters should the goods in transit be illegally disposed of for home consumption in the country of transit.
- xii) **Trade and Development Bank (TDB);** To advance socio-economic development and regional integration across its Member States by financing and fostering trade.
- xiii) **The COMESA Re-Insurance Company (ZEP-RE);** To promote and develop the insurance industry of the region by fostering the development of the insurance and reinsurance industry in the COMESA Sub-Region; promoting the growth of national, sub-regional and regional underwriting and retention capacity; and supporting sub-regional economic development.

1.2.4 COMESA's Vision and Mission

The Vision of COMESA is, *"To be a fully integrated, internationally competitive regional economic community with high standards of living for all its people ready to merge into the African Economic Community"*.

The vision outlines the establishment of a substantial, unified economic zone encompassing Eastern and Southern African states, prioritising shared prosperity, regional integration, and cohesion. The principal elements of this vision are as follows:

- i) *Economic transformation and empowerment:* The use of technology to foster a resilient future and empower people.
- ii) *Sustained growth:* Enhancing production levels and economic growth to improve the general welfare of the region.
- iii) *Infrastructure development:* Improvement of road, rail, and air transport infrastructure

The Mission of COMESA is, *"To endeavour to achieve sustainable economic and social progress in all*

Member States through increased co-operation and integration in all fields of development particularly in trade, customs and monetary affairs, transport, communication and information, technology, industry and energy, gender, agriculture, environment and natural resources". The overall goal is to build a fully integrated and competitive regional economic community that will eventually merge into the larger African Economic Community.

1.2.5 COMESA Court

The COMESA Court of Justice (CCJ), established in 1994 under Article 7 of the COMESA Treaty, serves as the judicial organ of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Its core mandate is to uphold the rule of law by ensuring the consistent interpretation and application of the Treaty across Member States. Article 23(1) of the Treaty grants the Court broad jurisdiction to adjudicate disputes involving Member States, the Council, the Common Market, and other stakeholders, including the provision of Advisory Opinions on legal matters.

The Court operates independently from COMESA's political organs, as enshrined in Articles 8(3) and 9(2)(c) of the Treaty, which explicitly shield its judicial functions from interference by the Authority or Council. Financial autonomy is further guaranteed under Article 42, empowering the Court to manage its own budget. This independence ensures impartiality in delivering justice and safeguarding regional integration objectives.

Composed of twelve Judges appointed by the Authority, the Court comprises two divisions: the First Instance Division (seven Judges, including a Principal Judge) and the Appellate Division (five Judges, led by a President). The Registrar is responsible for the day to day administration of the business of the Court. To align with evolving regional priorities, the Court periodically refines its vision, mission, and strategic goals, ensuring coherence with COMESA's broader aspirations for economic integration, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

1.2.6 The Seat of the Court

The Court was temporarily hosted within the COMESA Secretariat from 1998 - 2002 but moved to its Permanent Seat in Khartoum, in the Republic of Sudan in 2005. Due to operational challenges, it moved back to Lusaka, Zambia in 2007 and later returned to Khartoum in 2014. These operational challenges persisted, and the Court had to move back to Lusaka in 2024.

1.2.7 Court Users

The CCJ's diverse user base includes Member States, private entities, COMESA employees, and national courts. With the deepening regional integration agenda, non-COMESA Member States and related continental and global players may demand the services of COMESA Court to resolve related disputes. In the current situation, while Member States may challenge Treaty violations, individuals and businesses must exhaust local remedies before accessing the Court, a requirement underscoring the complementary role of national and regional judiciaries. The Court's accessibility is further enhanced by provisions allowing third-party interventions and preliminary rulings for national courts, fostering a cohesive legal ecosystem.

The Court can be accessed by:

i) *Member States*

A Member State may bring a reference against another Member State or the Council of Ministers in the event there is failure to fulfil an obligation under the Treaty or in case of infringement of a Treaty provision by a Member State or Council. In the same spirit, a Member State can refer to the Court an application for determination of the legality of any act, decision regulation or directive of the Council of Ministers on grounds that such an act, decision regulation or directive is unlawful or constitutes infringement of a Treaty provision.

ii) *Legal and Natural Persons*

This refers to any legal or natural person resident in a Member State challenging the legality of an act, decision, regulation or directive of the Council or of a Member State on grounds that such an act, decision, regulation or directive is unlawful or constitutes an infringement of the provisions of the Treaty. This Article, however, imposes an obligation on people to exhaust all local remedies before a reference is made to the Court.

iii) *The Secretary-General*

Where the Secretary-General considers that a Member State has failed to fulfil an obligation under this Treaty or has infringed a provision of this Treaty subject to Article 25(2&3) of the Treaty.

iv) *COMESA Employees and Third parties*

On application and interpretation of the Staff Rules and Regulations of the Secretariat or other institutions regarding the terms and conditions of employment of the employees and third parties against COMESA or its institutions for acts of their employees in the performance of their duties.

v) *National Courts*

Where a question concerning the application or interpretation of the Treaty or validity of regulations, directives and decisions of the Common Market has been raised in proceedings before that Court or Tribunal, if a ruling on the question is necessary to enable it to give judgment.

vi) *Interveners*

A Member State, the Secretary-General or a resident of a Member State who is not a party to a case before the Court may, with leave of the Court, intervene in that case, but the submissions of the intervening party shall be limited to evidence supporting or opposing the arguments of a party to the case.

1.2.8 Legal Systems Pertaining to the COMESA Court of Justice

Drawing from Common Law, Civil Law, Islamic Law, and hybrid traditions, the CCJ navigates a pluralistic legal landscape. Article 38 of the Treaty empowers the Court to make its own rules of procedure pursuant to which in 2016 the Court reviewed its Rules of Procedure and in 2018 its Arbitration Rules. Its 2016 Rules of Procedure and 2018 Arbitration Rules reflect adaptability, incorporating supranational standards

like the UNIDROIT Principles. By referencing precedents from the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) and the European Court of Justice (ECJ), the CCJ enriches its jurisprudence, ensuring consistency across COMESA's multicultural membership. However, debates persist over expanding its jurisdiction to address low case volumes, potentially positioning the Court as a supranational appellate body.

PART II:

AUDIT OF THE PAST MEDIUM-
TERM STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2025

2.0 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE 2021-2025 CCJ STRATEGY

This section evaluates the COMESA Court of Justice's (CCJ) performance during the 2021–2025 Medium-Term Strategic Plan, highlighting achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. By dissecting progress across the five strategic priorities dispensation of justice, institutional capacity, operational efficiency, visibility, and ICT adoption, the audit identifies gaps, and that informs the recalibration of the 2026–2030 strategy.

2.1 Audit Overview

The COMESA Court of Justice (CCJ) demonstrated commendable resilience and efficacy in implementing its 2021–2025 Medium-Term Strategic Plan, achieving over 90% success in its core mandate of dispensing justice and 80% efficiency in operational delivery. Despite operating in a challenging environment marked by the prolonged political and economic instability in Sudan—which necessitated the temporary relocation of its Seat to Lusaka, Zambia, in 2024—the Court advanced institutional reforms, digital transformation, and capacity-building initiatives. Institutional restructuring efforts achieved 72% progress, driven by staff adaptability and targeted training programmes. However, the Court's visibility remained suboptimal, underscoring the need for robust stakeholder engagement and communication strategies in the next planning cycle.

2.2 Findings from the Performance evaluation of the 2021-2025 strategy

The audit of the Strategic Plan revealed mixed outcomes across the five strategic priorities, reflecting both milestones and systemic challenges, the details of which are presented in a separate End Term Evaluation Report for the CCJ Strategy 2021-2025.

2.2.1 Strategic Priorities Performance

At operational level and based on the end of medium-term plan evaluation of the internal operations and management against external environment; the organizational and administrative structures and human and financial resource development and strategic relationships, against which the program delivery and impact had been assessed, returning adequate and effective operational performance of the organizational and administrative structures. Without additional resources, the systems would be overstretched by the additional demands of the new strategy.

Strategic Issue 1: Dispensation of Justice

As the CCJ's core mandate, this issue focused on expanding access to justice and strengthening judicial independence.

Achievements

The CCJ achieved a high case resolution rate, adjudicating all disputes filed during the period. These include:

- i) Digitalisation of the Court operations and systems, supported with adoption of electronic filing of pleadings and virtual hearings, increase in circuit court sittings, leading to prompt adjudication of all cases files.
- ii) Organizational Restructuring- Separated the powers of the Secretary-General and the

CCJ to secure the independence of the Court and accountability.

- iii) Policy Modernization: Updated administrative policies and financial systems, including the adoption of the COMESA Court Digital Evidence Management System (CCDEMS), which digitized case filing, HR processes, and budget tracking.
- iv) Strengthened partnerships with regional courts, though collaboration was hindered by jurisdictional overlaps between COMESA, multiple memberships of member states in other RECs and AfCFTA legal frameworks.

Challenges

- i) The legal aid scheme though developed, has not been operationalized.
- ii) Limited progress in enhancing access to justice due to Sudan's instability disrupting physical operations.
- iii) Financial constraints curtailed initiatives to bolster judicial independence.
- iv) Jurisdictional Overlaps: from multi-REC memberships resulting in Forum shopping between national and regional courts creates fragmentation.
- v) Temporary relocation of the Court to Lusaka rendered the use of the existing Resource Centre in Khartoum redundant.

Recommendations

1. Leverage Articles 26 and 30 of the COMESA Treaty to harmonize jurisdictional mandates with AfCFTA/TFTA protocols.
2. Integrate virtual hearings to mitigate geopolitical disruptions.
3. Pending amendments to the COMESA Treaty expanding jurisdiction mandate of the Court, leverage AfCFTA/WTO DSM Mechanisms to Resolve trade disputes through multilateral safeguards (e.g., NTBs, SPS issues) while advocating for Treaty reforms.
4. Set up a temporary resource centre in Lusaka to support the operations of the Court.

Strategic Issue 2: Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building

Aimed at modernizing policies and financial systems to enhance efficiency.

Achievements

- i) 100% staff and judicial training compliance, enhancing expertise in trade law and digital case management.
- ii) Partial modernization of organizational structure, policies, and financial systems, including the adoption of a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).
- iii) Digital Transformation: improving data security and enabled virtual hearings during COVID-19 restrictions.
- iv) Budget Efficiency: Improved absorption rates (84% in 2021 to 91% in 2022) reflected enhanced fiscal discipline and resource allocation.

Challenges

- i) Delays in finalizing structural reforms due to budgetary shortfalls and understaffing.
- ii) Funding Volatility: Over-reliance on irregular Member States contributions delayed full achievement of some activities.
- iii) Staffing Shortages: Lean teams faced work overload, impacting policy implementation and stakeholder engagement.
- iv) Infrastructure Gaps: Inadequate equipment hindered full utilization of digital systems.

Recommendations

1. Prioritize technology-driven solutions to streamline workflows and reduce reliance on manual processes, with high labour demand.
2. Diversify Funding: targeting programme based and fee for service to augment existing resource mobilisation avenues, to reduce reliance on Member States contributions.
3. Finalize Recruitment: Prioritize filling vacant roles to alleviate staff burdens and improve policy execution.

Strategic Issue 3: Enhancing Court Operations

Focused on stabilizing operations amid Sudan's instability.

Achievements

- i) Successfully amended the Treaty to stagger judicial appointments, ensuring continuity.
- ii) Temporarily relocated the Seat to Lusaka after a decade of instability in Sudan.
- iii) Digitalization of virtual hearings and e-filing systems reduced costs and improved accessibility during COVID-19.

Challenges

- i) Political Instability: Prolonged instability at the Seat of the Court adversely affected long-term planning.
- ii) COVID-19 Disruptions: Movement restrictions curtailed in-person court sessions and stakeholder consultations.

Recommendations

1. Transition to digital sub-registries to reduce operational costs and expand accessibility.
2. Resilience Frameworks: Integrate contingency plans for geopolitical and health crises.

Strategic Issue 4: Visibility of the Court

Sought to amplify stakeholder engagement and public awareness on CCJ legal underpinnings.

Achievements

- i) Developed a draft communication strategy but has yet to be operationalised.

- ii) Leveraged Social Media Engagement: Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for awareness campaigns.

Challenges

- i) Low Awareness levels among businesses and citizens about the Court and how to access its services.
- ii) Staffing/Resource Shortages: in which lean teams struggled to execute visibility activities amid operational priorities.
- iii) Down scaling of Evolution of Technology master plan limited the scope of the institution's visibility activities.
- iv) Training Gaps: for skills upgrades to maximize on available ICT tools limit staff capacities to leverage technology facilitated operations in service delivery.

Recommendations

1. Deploy social media campaigns and partnerships with COMESA agencies to amplify outreach.
2. Conduct biennial feedback assessments to refine engagement strategies.
3. Benchmark Best Practices from EACJ/EU models for public legal education.

Strategic Issue 5: ICT Adoption

Aimed at digitizing operations for scalability.

Achievements

- i) Partial digitization of filings and hearings, improving case management efficiency.
- ii) Prompt digitised evidence management system, and financial systems, as well as ICT infrastructure set up at the sub-registry in Lusaka, Zambia during the temporary relocation.
- iii) Website Revamp to enhance public access to decisions and other information.

Challenges

- i) Outdated software and inconsistent funding stalled full implementation of the ICT master plan.
- ii) Training Gaps to upgrade staff skills to maximize on available ICT tools.

Recommendations

1. Allocate dedicated ICT budgets and explore public-private partnerships for technology upgrades.
2. Enhance regular ICT judicial digital training tools for the judges and staff.

2.2.2 Key Achievements

In light of the additional commitments of COMESA under the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), the

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)¹, and emerging issues², the institutional review assessed the suitability of the current structures to manage and effectively fulfil its mandate and contribute to the economic and social development of the COMESA region, having undertaken several reforms to position itself to navigate future opportunities and risks effectively; and reinforcing its role in upholding the rule of law within the COMESA region.

By proactively addressing the diversification and expansion of the Courts jurisdiction mandate and the emerging issues in the strategy, the CCJ institutional capacity and organizational modifications and adaptations may be required to strengthen its role in promoting regional integration, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring access to justice within the COMESA region. The new strategic plan should build on past achievements while addressing emerging issues and opportunities. These include:

- I. **Structural Reforms:** Revised the Court's organizational hierarchy and filled critical vacancies to enhance decision-making agility.
- II. **Legal Modernization:** Amended Article 20 of the COMESA Treaty and updated procedural rules to align with digital workflows.
- III. **Capacity Building:** Trained 100% of Judges and staff on emerging legal trends, including e-commerce and climate-related disputes.
- IV. **Relocation Success:** Managed seamless temporary relocation to Lusaka, minimizing disruptions to case timelines.
- V. **Digital Transformation:** Launched e-filing systems and virtual hearings, reducing case backlog by 25%.

2.2.3 Challenges, Constraints, and proposed intervention

The COMESA Court of Justice (CCJ) operates within a complex regional landscape, balancing judicial mandates, geopolitical multi-REC challenges, and evolving economic priorities. The Court faced several challenges during the Plan period 2021 - 2025. The critical challenge which has impeded the operations of the Court for over 10 years relates to political and economic instability and resource constraints.

Challenges and constraints

- i) **Geopolitical Instability:** Sudan's crisis necessitated reactive relocation, diverting resources from strategic goals.
- ii) **Financial Limitations:** Over-reliance on Member State contributions stifled innovation and stalled sub-registry rollouts.

¹ The AfCFTA aims to establish a single market for goods and services across the continent, which will likely lead to legal challenges and jurisdictional issues during implementation and emerging issues of digital trade and e-commerce, Investment protection and dispute resolution, Competition law, Intellectual property rights, Consumer protection, among other changes

² Climate change and technological developments present multifaceted challenges that could potentially result in disputes related to environmental regulations, resource management, displacement, and transboundary harm, all of which could come before the Court.

- iii) **Awareness Gaps:** Low utilization of Treaty provisions (e.g., Articles 26 and 30) by MS legal institutions.
- iv) **Staffing Shortages:** Lean teams hampered stakeholder engagement and delayed policy reviews.
- v) **ICT Deficits:** Aging IT infrastructure limited scalability of digital services.

Proposed Interventions

1. Diversify funding to include leveraging programme-based funding and charging fees for services rendered.
2. Launch multilingual awareness campaigns targeting national judiciaries and businesses.
3. Adopt cloud-based platforms for remote operations and staff training.

Table 1: Challenges and Proposed Interventions

	Challenges and constraints	Proposed interventions
1	Political and economic instability at Seat of the Court in Khartoum, Sudan	Inbuilt institutional flexibilities to adapt to changing environment on short notice
2	Resource constraints, with MS contributions being the only source of funding	Diversify resource mobilization initiatives, to build extra-budgetary resources programme-based partnerships and fee for service to mobilise additional resources to operationalize priority interventions
3	Lean staff complements	Leverage technology facilitates operations to improve efficiency in resources, use, service delivery , etc. Prioritized training on need basis to be continued in the new strategy, and Leverage online training resources for continuous staff training
4	Lack of awareness on available treaty provisions (articles 26 & 30) for MSs use to access justice in the Court	Targeted sensitization of MS legal institutions
5	Limited stakeholder engagement	Regular user satisfaction surveys for feedback on the Courts performance
6	Poor visibility of the Court	Build on social media innovations to improve the visibility of the Court
7	Resource constraints for sustaining ICT use and regular system upgrades	Explore institutional websites with free digital tools and services to enhance continued digitalization of Court operations and services

2.2.4 Lessons Learned

Key insights from the evaluation include:

1. **Digitalization is a Force Multiplier:** Virtual tools reduced costs by 30% and improved access for remote stakeholders.
2. **Adaptability is Critical:** Flexible strategies enabled continuity amid Sudan’s instability.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement Drives Impact:** Social media engagement during COVID-19 improved transparency despite resource gaps.
4. **Regional Stability Fuels Integration:** Peaceful Member States correlated with higher case resolution rates and compliance.
5. **Hybrid Legal Systems Offer Synergies:** Leveraging COMESA’s pluralistic legal traditions enriched jurisprudence and cross-border enforcement.

Table 2: Lessons Learned

	Strategic Issue	Key Lessons Learnt
1	Dispensation of Justice	Digitalisation of systems in the Courts operations improves the efficiency in the delivery of services and the security of the Court
2	Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building	Need for flexibility and adaptability to ensure buy-in in the successful implementation of the commitment towards achievement of Strategic goals
		Political and economic instability disrupts expectations of regional integration
		Enhance the institutional and structural capacity with targeted skills upgrading
		Benchmark best practices shorten in the staggering of appointment of judges the learning curve
3	Enhancing the operations of the Court	Digitalisation of the operations and processes of the CCJ cuts down on resource requirements
		Dividends from peace and security are critical for business, service delivery and regional integration
4	Enhancing the Visibility of the Court	Insecurity destabilizes operations.
		Innovation with the use of social media to obtain feedback from stakeholder mitigated challenges associated with insecurity and COVID
5	Adopting ICT	Digitalization of operations improves service delivery with least costs
		Targeted ICT platforms for better outreach to population segments, social media for the youth, and improving information flow

The 2021–2025 Strategic Plan laid a robust foundation for judicial modernization, yet persistent gaps in visibility, funding, and ICT underscore the need for a recalibrated strategy. By institutionalizing digital workflows, diversifying partnerships, and prioritizing stakeholder engagement, the CCJ can transcend operational bottlenecks and solidify its role as a beacon of justice in Africa’s integration journey.

PART III:

SITUATION ANALYSIS

3.0 STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

This analysis provides a comprehensive assessment of the COMESA Court of Justice's (CCJ) internal capabilities and external operating environment. By integrating findings from a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, stakeholder mapping, and a PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal) evaluation, this section identifies the critical factors that will shape the Court's strategic direction for 2026-2030. The objective is to leverage internal strengths to capitalize on external opportunities while mitigating weaknesses and threats.

3.1 Overview

The CCJ operates in a dynamic landscape defined by the ambitious rollout of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), rapid technological change, and persistent geopolitical and resource challenges. The analysis confirms that the Court's path to greater impact hinges on its ability to proactively adapt its mandate and operations. Key to this will be leveraging its core strengths namely judicial excellence and growing digital capabilities to address critical weaknesses in visibility and funding, thereby positioning itself as an indispensable forum for resolving Africa's next generation of cross-border disputes.

3.2 Integrated Strategic Assessment

The following integrated assessment synthesizes the internal and external environment scans to provide a clear foundation for the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Table 3: Strategic Assessment Summary

Analysis Framework	Key Insights	Direct Strategic Implication
INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT		
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judicial Independence & Excellence ICT Advancements & Digitalization Hybrid Legal Expertise Regional Legitimacy 	Provides a foundation of credibility, operational efficiency, and legal adaptability.	Leverage these strengths as the engine for strategic growth and to enhance the Court's reputation.
Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Case Intake & Visibility Over-reliance on Member State Funding Lean Staffing & Capacity Gaps Outdated ICT Infrastructure in parts 	Limits the Court's reach, financial resilience, and operational effectiveness.	Must be addressed as a top priority to ensure the Court's relevance and sustainability.
EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT		
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AfCFTA & TFTA Integration Emerging Issues (Climate, Digital Trade) Demand for Specialized Dispute Resolution 	Presents avenues for expanded jurisdiction, increased caseload, and enhanced relevance.	The core rationale for strategic evolution; the Court must adapt to capture these opportunities.

Analysis Framework	Key Insights	Direct Strategic Implication
<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jurisdictional Overlaps (AfCFTA, other RECs) ▪ Geopolitical Instability ▪ Funding Volatility & Member State Arrears 	Creates operational disruption, legal fragmentation, and financial insecurity.	Requires proactive risk management and contingency planning.
<p>STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MS & COMESA Organs: Enforcement & Coherence. 2. Private Sector & Litigants: Access & Transparency. 3. Development Partners: Accountability & Impact. 	Highlights a gap between the Court’s potential and its perceived utility among key users.	Demands a concerted focus on stakeholder engagement, communication, and service delivery.
<p>PESTEL FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political: Instability in Sudan; AfCFTA progress. ▪ Economic: MS arrears; growth in intra-COMESA trade. ▪ Technological: Rise of e-commerce; cybersecurity risks. ▪ Legal: Jurisdictional overlaps with other DSMs. 	The broader context that amplifies both opportunities and threats.	Necessitates a Court that is agile, technologically adept, and diplomatically engaged.

3.3 Synthesis and Strategic Imperatives

The analyses above converge to define four key strategic imperatives that directly inform the strategic objectives in Part IV:

1. **Expand Jurisdictional Relevance:** To capitalize on the opportunities presented by AfCFTA, digital trade, and climate governance, the Court must proactively review and modernize its legal mandate to resolve emerging cross-border disputes.
2. **Enhance Institutional Resilience:** To mitigate threats of funding volatility and geopolitical instability, and to address internal weaknesses, the Court must diversify its funding, strengthen its capacity, and solidify its operational continuity plans.
3. **Amplify Stakeholder Engagement and Visibility:** To convert the weakness of low awareness into the strength of high utilization, the Court must launch targeted campaigns to educate and engage Member States, the private sector, and legal communities.
4. **Accelerate Digital Transformation:** To leverage its ICT advancements and meet stakeholder demands for efficiency and accessibility, the Court must fully digitize its operations and develop capabilities for handling technology-driven disputes.

PART IV:

THE CCJ 2026-2030 Strategic
Model

4.0 STRATEGIC MODEL

The CCJ's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan is designed to consolidate its role as a cornerstone of regional integration and legal governance while adapting to evolving geopolitical, economic, and technological landscapes. Aligned with COMESA's four pillars of integration (Market Integration, Physical Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender/Social Integration), the strategy integrates emerging global and continental priorities, including the AfCFTA & TFTA, climate resilience, digital trade, and sustainable development. By leveraging lessons from the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan and addressing persistent challenges such as resource constraints, visibility gaps, and jurisdictional clarity, the Court aims to enhance its relevance, efficiency, and impact.

4.1 Overview of the CCJ's Strategic Direction and Priorities

The COMESA Court of Justice's (CCJ) Strategic Plan is strategically aligned with the broader vision of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to accelerate regional economic integration through sustained regional integration, thereby contributing significantly to the global and continental development agenda as outlined in the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030).

A key ambition of the CCJ is to anchor its legal framework on all four pillars of Market Integration: *Physical Integration/Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender and Social Integration*. Recognising the dynamic operational landscape, the Court intends to proactively address emerging issues associated with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Tripartite (TFTA), including areas such as climate change, digital trade and e-commerce, investment protection and dispute resolution, competition law, intellectual property rights, and consumer protection, all of which are anticipated to be potential sources of future cases.

To effectively reinforce the rules-based economic and trading systems inherent in AfCFTA and TFTA multi-Regional Economic Community (REC) partnerships, there is an identified necessity to develop a tripartite shared partnership protocol involving the COMESA Secretariat (SG), Member States (MSs), and the CCJ, ensuring comprehensive compliance with regional, continental, and global commitments.

The CCJ's new strategic plan for the period 2026-2030 will be structured around six strategic issues: *enhancing its jurisdiction mandate* to align with the overall COMESA REC mandate, the AfCFTA, and emerging issues; ensuring the efficient *dispensation of justice*; undertaking *institutional strengthening and capacity building*; *streamlining and strengthening the Court's operations*; improving the *visibility of the Court*; and effectively *leveraging the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in its day-to-day operations*.

The overarching aim in developing this robust and comprehensive five-year Strategic Plan (2026-2030) is to ensure that the CCJ can effectively and efficiently fulfil its mandated objectives, which fundamentally include upholding the rule of law and ensuring consistent adherence to the COMESA Treaty. This strategic direction necessitates a continuous alignment with changes in the operational environment and the strategic leveraging of ICT to enhance the efficient utilisation of resources and improve the overall visibility of the Court.

4.2 Vision, Mission, and Values

With the overall goal of COMESA to build a fully integrated and competitive regional economic community that will eventually merge into the larger African Economic Community, the Strategic Direction aims at providing structure, processes and outputs that will facilitate the CCJ in fulfilling its mandate and justifying its existence and thus continue to make contribution to economic and social development of the COMESA Region. The CCJ needs a clear strategic direction which requires an articulation of its purpose, business, and what it intended to accomplish. This was done by specifying its Mandate, Vision, Mission, and Core Values

- **Vision:** *“A world-class court promoting regional integration responsive to changes in the operational environment.*
- **Mission:** *“To contribute to regional integration by interpreting and applying Community Law, upholding the rule of law, and providing prompt and transparent determination of disputes through the highest standards of administrative performance and judicial excellence”.*

Core Values

The core values of the Court; Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Accessibility, Adaptability and Flexibility, and Accountability shall be retained.

- I. **Independence:** The Court will uphold and exemplify judicial independence in both its individual and institutional aspects. Court decisions will be made based on thorough understanding of applicable law and facts of the case and shall apply its mandate, without any restriction, improper influence, inducement, pressure, threat, or interference, from any person, institution, Organ or Authority.
- II. **Impartiality:** The Court will apply the principle of neutrality in dispute resolution and management of court operations.
- III. **Integrity:** In discharging its functions, the Court will consistently uphold the highest ideals of honesty, openness, and veracity in the delivery of justice.
- IV. **Competence:** The Court will continuously take steps to maintain, enhance staff knowledge, skills and personal qualities for proper performance and inculcate professionalism in all its operations.
- V. **Accessibility:** The Court will endeavour to minimize barriers that impede access to justice by court users and lay its foundation on ICT optimization.
- VI. **Accountability:** The Court will take responsibility for its actions through ensuring stringent standards of conduct; self-enforcement of legal and ethical rules; good stewardship of Member States funds and property; effective and efficient use of resources.
- VII. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Contingent ability to adjust to changing circumstances or environments, with flexibility to adjust quickly and easily to new situations or tasks.

Goal

To uphold the rule of law and ensure adherence to the COMESA Treaty in alignment with the global and continental development agenda by 2030.

4.3 Strategic Objectives and Key Interventions

The strategic priorities for 2026-2030, encompassing a proactive approach to emerging issues, the reinforcement of legal frameworks, and the adoption of technological advancements, will collectively shape the strategic objectives and priorities of the COMESA Court of Justice (CCJ) in the coming years, as detailed in its new Strategic Plan for 2026-2030.

The core purpose behind the development of this robust and comprehensive five-year Strategic Plan (2026-2030) is to ensure that the Court effectively and efficiently fulfils its mandated objectives, which fundamentally include upholding the rule of law and ensuring adherence to the COMESA Treaty. This necessitates a continuous alignment with changes in the operational environment, recognising the impact of developments such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), TFTA and global challenges like climate and technological changes and associated commitments.

Furthermore, leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is crucial to improve the efficient use of resources and enhance the visibility of the Court. The strategic objectives will be further informed by the need to anchor the CCJ's legal framework on all four pillars of COMESA's Market Integration: Physical Integration/Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender and Social Integration. Ultimately, these strategic objectives and key interventions aim to strengthen the CCJ's role in promoting regional integration and ensuring access to justice within the COMESA region. These include:

Strategic Issue 1: Responsiveness of the Court to Operational Environment Changes

Strategic Objective (1): *To enhance alignment of the Court's jurisdiction mandate with the overall COMESA REC pillars of integration*

Activities

- i) Review and benchmark COMESA institutions that have internationalised their instruments, for lesson learning.
- ii) Review Treaty provisions on mandate jurisdiction to align with changes in the operational environment.
- iii) Amend Treaty Article 26 to clarify jurisdiction overlaps and enable direct access for non-state actors.
- iv) Sensitisation of the various stakeholders on the revised Treaty provisions.

Strategic Objective (2): *To align Court jurisdiction mandate with AfCFTA, TFTA, WTO and global emerging issues.*

Activities

- i) Conduct a comparative study on AfCFTA and WTO dispute mechanisms to harmonize protocols.
- ii) Identify and develop training modules for Judges on climate-related trade disputes and digital commerce.

Strategic Issue 2: Enhanced Dispensation of Justice

Strategic Objective: *To Improve efficiency and inclusiveness in dispute resolution and dispensation of justice.*

Activities

- i) Leverage articles 26, 30, ADR among others to improve access to justice.
- ii) Establish virtual sub-registries in Member States (MS) to reduce logistical barriers.
- iii) Benchmarking against regional and global best practices including AfCFTA and WTO dispute mechanisms to harmonize protocols to improve access to justice and dispute settlement.
- iv) Adopt AI-driven case management systems to reduce backlogs.

Strategic Issue 3: Institutional Strengthening and capacity building

Strategic Objective (1): *Align the institutional structure and capacity of the Court, with changes in the operational environment.*

Activities

- i) Needs assessments of new commitments on changes in the operational environment.
- ii) Capacity building and skills upgrading on new and emerging issues.
- iii) Implement a merit-based recruitment system to fill critical vacancies.

Strategic Objective (2): *Build financial and operational resilience.*

Activities

- i) Improve financial management systems.
- ii) Secure programme-based resources and charge token fees in support of extra budgetary funding.
- iii) Build a resource mobilisation strategy to diversify sources of funding in a sustainable way.
- iv) Explore the Caribbean financing arrangements supported by a Trust Fund for lesson learning.

Strategic Issue 4: Streamline and strengthen the operations of the Court.

Strategic Objective: *To Streamline and strengthen the Courts operations*

Activities

- i) Regular policy updates and complementary support procedures and rules.
- ii) Digitalisation of Court systems and operations.

Strategic Issue 5: Enhanced Visibility, Communication, And Stakeholder Engagement

Strategic Objective: *To enhance the visibility of the Court.*

Activities

- i) Enhance the court users' satisfaction.
- ii) Amplify awareness and trust in CCJ's role.
- iii) Publish annual impact reports and host regional judicial forums.
- iv) Launch a multilingual social media campaign targeting businesses and youth.
- v) Increase engagement of court users and other stakeholders with feedback on regular basis

Strategic Issue 6: Enhanced ICT Integration

Strategic Objective: *To enhance the ICT Infrastructure connectivity and application of digital tools to achieve full digital transformation.*

Activities

- i) Digitalisation of the Courts operation to enhance service delivery.
- ii) Develop an integrated ICT master plan with cybersecurity safeguards.
- iii) Automation of the Court - ICT reports.
- iv) Dissemination of CCJ law.
- v) Partner with stakeholders to pilot technologies, such as blockchain, for enhanced services delivery.

4.4 Linkages of Strategic Issues for CCJ 2026-2030 Strategy with COMESA Pillars of Integration

The COMESA Court of Justice's (CCJ) strategic direction for the 2026-2030 period is structured around six fundamental and interconnected strategic pillars. These pillars are designed to ensure the Court effectively fulfils its mandate within the evolving regional and continental landscapes, directly supporting its overarching goal of promoting regional integration, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring access to

justice within the COMESA region. Each pillar integrates responses to challenges outlined in Sections 2.2.2 (Key Achievements), 2.2.3 (Challenges and Constraints), and 2.2.4 (Lessons Learned), while directly supporting COMESA's four pillars: Market Integration, Physical Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender/Social Integration.

STRATEGIC ISSUE 1: Responsiveness to Operational Environment Changes

1. Aligning the Court's jurisdiction mandate with the COMESA REC mandate

This strategic issue is crucial for the CCJ to remain a relevant and impactful institution within the dynamic context of regional and continental integration. It directly addresses the strategic objective of *aligning the Court's jurisdiction mandate with the COMESA REC mandate, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), TFTA, and emerging global trends*. The operational environment is constantly changing with the deepening of regional integration through initiatives like the AfCFTA, TFTA and the increasing prominence of issues such as climate change, digital trade and e-commerce, investment protection and dispute resolution, competition law, and intellectual property rights. These emerging issues are potential sources of cases for the CCJ. The outgoing strategy already saw the leveraging of the WTO DSM and AfCFTA DSM in reviews of legal frameworks. However, the Court must continue to be responsive to political challenges, deeper regional integration, and the need for greater visibility.

a) *Strategic Focus*

The CCJ will proactively review its legal frameworks, potentially leveraging the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) and the AfCFTA DSM while benchmarking against regional and global best practices to improve access to justice and dispute settlement. This will involve conducting comparative studies, amending Treaty provisions to clarify jurisdictional overlaps and potentially enable direct access for non-state actors, and sensitising stakeholders on the implications of these evolving frameworks. Adaptability, a key lesson learned from past experiences, will be critical in navigating these changes. The CCJ also needs to appraise itself of emerging issues to remain relevant and impactful.

b) *Linkages to COMESA Pillars of integration*

This pillar is primarily linked to Market Integration by ensuring the CCJ is equipped to handle disputes arising from increased cross-border trade and investment under the AfCFTA and within COMESA. It also has implications for Productive Integration by addressing potential disputes related to competition law and intellectual property rights. Furthermore, as the CCJ considers emerging issues like climate change, it indirectly supports Physical Integration/Connectivity and Gender and Social Integration by addressing the legal dimensions of these areas within the regional integration agenda.

2. Alignment with Continental and Global Legal Frameworks

Alignment with Continental and Global Legal Frameworks marks a significant step in the evolution of the COMESA Court of Justice (CCJ), recognising the increasing interconnectedness of regional, continental, and international legal regimes. This pillar is introduced to ensure that the CCJ remains a relevant and effective judicial body within the broader context of African economic integration, particularly with the advent of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), TFTA and the existing framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO). By strategically focusing on harmonising its operations and jurisdiction

with these overarching legal structures, the CCJ aims to strengthen its role in promoting regional integration, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring access to justice across the COMESA region and within the wider African continent. This proactive alignment is essential for navigating the complexities of multi-REC memberships and leveraging the opportunities presented by enhanced continental trade and cooperation.

a) *Strategic Focus*

The key focus of this pillar is to harmonise the CCJ's jurisdiction and operations with the AfCFTA, WTO dispute settlement mechanisms (DSM), and other pertinent regional and global commitments. This involves several key aspects:

- i) **AfCFTA Synergy:** The CCJ aims to position itself as a supplementary forum for AfCFTA-related disputes, particularly those involving private entities, addressing the state-centric nature of the AfCFTA DSM.
- ii) **Leveraging International Best Practices:** The CCJ intends to review its legal frameworks, potentially leveraging the WTO DSM and the AfCFTA DSM while benchmarking regional/global best practices for improved access to justice and dispute settlement. This includes conducting comparative studies on AfCFTA/WTO dispute mechanisms to harmonise protocols.
- iii) **Clarifying Jurisdictional Overlaps:** Amendments to the COMESA Treaty, specifically Articles 26 and 30, are proposed to clarify jurisdictional overlaps with the AfCFTA and potentially enable direct access for non-state actors. Sensitisation of Member States' court systems on provisions for referring cases touching on regional integration to the CCJ is also planned.
- iv) **Addressing Emerging Issues:** The CCJ's strategy proactively addresses emerging issues associated with the AfCFTA, such as climate change, digital trade and e-commerce, investment protection, competition law, and intellectual property rights, which are potential sources of future cases.

b) *Linkages to COMESA Pillars*

This pillar on Alignment with Continental and Global Legal Frameworks directly reinforces the existing COMESA Pillars:

- i) **Market Integration:** By actively resolving cross-border trade disputes and aligning with the AfCFTA's goals of tariff liberalisation, the CCJ contributes directly to boosting intra-COMESA trade, increasing its contribution to GDP. The effective interpretation and application of COMESA law, consistent with broader trade agreements, is crucial for a thriving expanding regional market.
- ii) **Productive Integration:** The CCJ's role in resolving conflicts in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, which are central to productive integration, will be enhanced through alignment with continental trade rules and dispute mechanisms. Addressing issues like competition law within the context of the AfCFTA will also support building

regional productive capacity.

- iii) **Physical Integration/Connectivity:** While not as direct as the other pillars, the CCJ's contribution to a stable and predictable legal environment for cross-border trade and investment can indirectly support initiatives in physical integration by fostering trust and encouraging infrastructure development that facilitates regional commerce.
- iv) **Gender and Social Integration:** The CCJ's commitment to mainstream gender and climate justice in its rulings, potentially through dedicated task forces, directly supports the pillar of Social Integration. By considering these dimensions in its interpretation and application of law, the CCJ can contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable regional integration agenda.

STRATEGIC ISSUE 2: Enhanced Dispensation of Justice

At the core of the CCJ's mandate lies the effective and fair resolution of disputes. This pillar directly supports the strategic objective of *improving the efficiency, inclusivity, and transparency of the Court's dispute resolution processes*. Challenges such as low case intake and the preference for national legal jurisdictions need to be addressed. While the outgoing Strategy saw the successful determination of all cases presented and amendments to the Treaty to stagger judicial appointments, significant hurdles remain. Sub-registries in Member States remained non-operational, and there is restrained political will for Member States to cede legal authority on matters touching on regional integration to the CCJ due to Article 26 of the COMESA Treaty requiring the exhaustion of domestic remedies. The lack of legal aid schemes also limits outreach

a) *Strategic Focus*

The CCJ will focus on enhancing access to justice through initiatives such as establishing virtual sub-registries in Member States to reduce logistical barriers and leveraging technology like AI-driven case management systems to reduce backlogs. Efforts will also be made to strengthen judicial independence and explore mechanisms to leverage Articles 26 and 30 of the COMESA Treaty to enhance the Court's jurisdiction and operations. Sensitising Member States' court systems on the provisions for referring cases related to regional integration to the CCJ will be a key activity. The AUC DSM and WTO safeguard mechanisms may be explored as options for conflict resolution while enhancing access to justice. The Court will also explore Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) options, and aim to improve the structure of the Court through structural reforms and clarifying the separation of powers

b) *Linkages to COMESA Pillars*

This pillar is fundamentally linked to the effective implementation of all four COMESA pillars. By providing a fair and efficient mechanism for dispute resolution, it directly supports Market Integration by resolving trade and investment disputes. It can also address disputes arising from Physical Connectivity projects, Productive Integration initiatives, and issues related to Gender and Social Integration, ensuring that legal challenges to these areas are resolved in accordance with the COMESA Treaty, ensuring that legal challenges to these areas are resolved in accordance with the COMESA Treaty. Leveraging COMESA's pluralistic legal traditions, a key lesson learned, can enrich jurisprudence and cross-border enforcement

STRATEGIC ISSUE 3: Institutional Strengthening Capacity Building

The long-term success of the CCJ in fulfilling its mandate depends on a robust and capable institution. This pillar encompasses the interconnected strategic objectives of *enhancing the institutional structure and capacity of the Court* and *improving its financial position*. The temporary relocation to Lusaka highlighted vulnerabilities in institutional resilience. While some progress was made with the digitalisation of operational systems, the Court faces challenges including understaffing, funding gaps due to delayed Member State contributions, and an over-dependence on these contributions.

a) *Strategic Focus*

The CCJ will prioritise institutional strengthening and capacity building through targeted training and collaboration to enhance the skills and competencies of judges and staff. Stabilising the Court's operations is crucial. Reviewing and updating organisational policies and systems to align with the revised mandate, strengthening collaboration mechanisms with the COMESA Secretariat and Member States through a tripartite shared partnership protocol, and diversifying funding sources through donor partnerships and other resource mobilisation strategies are also key priorities. Implementing a merit-based recruitment system will also contribute to strengthening capacity.

b) *Linkages to COMESA Pillars*

A strong and well-resourced CCJ provides essential support for all four COMESA pillars. Its capacity to interpret and apply COMESA law effectively underpins Market Integration, Physical Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender and Social Integration by ensuring a stable and predictable legal environment for regional initiatives. Adequate financial and human resources are crucial for the Court to handle disputes arising from activities within each of these pillars.

STRATEGIC ISSUE 4: Streamlined and Strengthened Court Operations

Optimising the internal functioning of the CCJ is essential for it to handle its responsibilities efficiently and effectively. This pillar is primarily linked to the strategic objective of *improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Court's day-to-day functioning*. The outgoing strategy saw digitalisation improve service delivery and the staggering of judicial appointments endorsed to avoid disruptions. The temporary relocation to Lusaka also ensured continuity amidst instability in Sudan. However, the Court continued to face operational challenges at its seat and the sub-registries remained largely unimplemented due to funding. There is a recognised need for continuous consultations with Member States to amend the Treaty to further enhance operations

a) *Strategic Focus*

Key activities under this pillar include staggering the appointment of judges to ensure continuity and institutional memory, further digitalisation of operational systems and establishing digital sub-registries to enhance accessibility and reduce reliance on manual processes. Continuously reviewing and updating the Court's rules of procedure and arbitration rules will also contribute to streamlining operations. Prioritising technology-driven solutions to streamline workflows is essential.

b) *Linkages to COMESA Pillars*

Efficient court operations directly support the smooth implementation of all four COMESA pillars. Timely and effective resolution of disputes related to Market Integration, Physical Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender and Social Integration contributes to the overall progress of regional integration. Streamlined operations enhance the CCJ's ability to contribute to a conducive business environment, fostering trade and investment, key elements of Market Integration and Productive Integration.

STRATEGIC ISSUE 5: Enhanced Visibility, Communication, and Stakeholder Engagement

Raising awareness of the CCJ's role and building strong relationships with stakeholders are crucial for its legitimacy and effectiveness. This pillar addresses the strategic objective of *amplifying awareness and understanding of the CCJ's mandate, jurisdiction, and impact within the COMESA region and beyond*. Low public awareness has been consistently identified as a significant challenge. While the outgoing strategy saw the development of a corporate communication strategy and enhanced use of social media, its implementation faced limitations. Beneficiaries remained largely uninformed.

a) *Strategic Focus*

The CCJ will focus on enhancing court user satisfaction through surveys and feedback mechanisms. *Increasing engagement with court users and other stakeholders through regular communication, including launching multilingual social media campaigns targeting businesses and youth and publishing annual impact reports, are key activities*. Exploring alternative ways of reaching beneficiaries of COMESA programmes and proactively sensitising national domestic legal bodies on available opportunities to strengthen the regional integration agenda are also important aspects of this pillar. Strengthening media relations through proactive engagement will be crucial. Hosting regional judicial forums will further enhance visibility and engagement. Building on social media communication arrangements to expand outreach and feedback is also planned.

b) *Linkages to COMESA Pillars*

Enhanced visibility and stakeholder engagement are crucial for the success of all four COMESA pillars. By raising awareness of its role in resolving disputes related to Market Integration, Physical Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender and Social Integration, the CCJ encourages greater utilisation of its services, thereby contributing to the effective implementation and enforcement of COMESA's regional integration agenda. Increased trust in the CCJ strengthens the rule of law underpinning all COMESA activities. Stakeholder engagement, as learned from past experiences, drives impact.

STRATEGIC ISSUE 6: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Integration

Embracing digital transformation is essential for the CCJ to modernise its operations and enhance its efficiency and accessibility. This pillar directly supports the strategic objective of *enhancing the ICT infrastructure and application of digital tools within the CCJ*. The previous strategy saw some progress with the implementation of the Digital Evidence Management System (CCDEMS), revamping the website, and activating social media platforms, as well as incorporating aspects of Management Information Systems in finance and HR. However, the development and implementation of a comprehensive ICT strategy faced staff and resource constraints, leading to partial achievement. Further investment in

software upgrades and equipment is needed.

a) *Strategic Focus*

The CCJ will focus on the identification of suitable judicial digital tools and the automation of court processes. Developing an integrated ICT master plan with cybersecurity safeguards is critical. Partnering with stakeholders to pilot innovative technologies, such as blockchain, for enhanced service delivery will also be explored. The further digitalisation of operational systems, including the establishment of digital sub-registries, will enhance accessibility and efficiency. Increasing budgetary allocations to software upgrades and acquisition of equipment, along with staff training on transitioning to ICT facilitated service delivery platforms, are planned interventions.

b) *Linkages to COMESA Pillars*

Leveraging ICT enhances the CCJ's capacity to support all four COMESA pillars more effectively. Digital tools can streamline dispute resolution processes related to Market Integration, improve communication and information sharing relevant to Physical Connectivity projects, enhance the efficiency of legal processes impacting Productive Integration, and improve access to justice for issues related to Gender and Social Integration. Challenges faced previously have bred innovations that can improve operational systems, as demonstrated by the adoption of virtual mechanisms during COVID-19. ICT integration contributes to a more efficient and accessible judicial system, benefiting all areas of COMESA's integration agenda.

In conclusion, the framework of six strategic issues for the CCJ's Strategy 2026-2030 represents a comprehensive and interconnected approach to bolstering the Court's effectiveness and relevance within the evolving landscape of regional integration. These pillars, encompassing the traditional areas of focus such as *enhancing the jurisdiction mandate, ensuring efficient dispensation of justice, undertaking institutional strengthening and capacity building, streamlining operations, improving visibility, and leveraging ICT*, are now further strengthened by the crucial seventh pillar of *Alignment with Continental and Global Legal Frameworks*. This new addition underscores the CCJ's commitment to harmonising its operations with the AfCFTA and other relevant international legal instruments, positioning it as a vital supplementary forum for dispute resolution and ensuring its jurisprudence remains consistent with broader continental and global trade and development agendas.

Collectively, these strategic pillars are designed to build upon the achievements and address the challenges identified in the evaluation of the outgoing Strategic Plan 2021-2025. By focusing on enhancing its jurisdiction, the CCJ aims to become more accessible and relevant to a wider range of stakeholders, including non-state actors involved in AfCFTA-related disputes. Simultaneously, strengthening institutional capacity, streamlining operations, and leveraging ICT are essential for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of justice delivery. Furthermore, enhancing the visibility of the Court and actively engaging with stakeholders are critical for building trust, raising awareness of its mandate and procedures, and ensuring that its impact is felt across the COMESA region.

Ultimately, these interconnected strategic pillars are geared towards fulfilling the CCJ's overarching mission to uphold the rule of law by ensuring equitable interpretation and application of the COMESA Treaty, resolving disputes transparently, and fostering regional cohesion through judicial excellence and innovation. By aligning its work with the COMESA's four pillars of Market Integration, Physical Integration/

Connectivity, Productive Integration, and Gender and Social Integration, as well as contributing to the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030), the CCJ, through these strategic pillars, aims to solidify its role as a pivotal judicial organ that significantly contributes to deeper regional and continental economic integration, peace, and sustainable development.

4.4.1 Strategic issues, Objectives and Activities

Table 5 outlines the strategic activities to be undertaken under each of the priority issues and objectives during the plan period.

Table 5: Strategic Objectives, Strategies and Activities

	Strategies	Key Activities
1	Strategic issue (1): Responsiveness of the Court to the operational environment changes	
	Strategic objective 1: To enhance and align the Court's jurisdiction mandate with the overall COMESA REC pillars of integration,	
1.1	Review the Courts jurisdiction mandate to align with operational environment	Identify potential disputes areas arising from the different pillars of integration, eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competition, IPR ▪ Climate change ▪ Trade related issues of digital trade, e-commerce
1.2	Review Treaty provisions on mandate jurisdiction	Amend Treaty Article 26 to clarify jurisdictional overlaps and enable direct access for non-state actors
		Review and benchmark legal frameworks to include reference to WTO DSM and AfCFTA DSM
1.3	Sensitisation of the various stakeholders on the revised Treaty	Sensitisation workshops to the national dispute remedy institutions
		Information sharing with regional, continental, and international courts
	Strategic Objective 2: To align Court mandate and jurisdiction with the AfCFTA, TFTA and other emerging issues on climate change, e-commerce, etc in upholding the rule of law and ensure adherence to the COMESA Treaty	
1.4	Document legal implications of AfCFTA/TFTA and emerging issues on operations of CCJ	Studies on implications of AfCFTA/TFTA and emerging issues on the operations of the Court
		Identify and align legal provisions to bridge gaps and facilitate amicable dispute settlement
1.5	Develop training modules for Judges on climate-related trade disputes and digital commerce	Identify likely disputes associated with impact of climate change, e-commerce, digital trade
		Integrating judicial issues on climate change, digital trade and commerce into CCJs judicial operations
1.6	Review and benchmark the WTO and AfCFTA DSM provisions in reviewing the relevant treaty provisions	Benchmarking against regional and global best practices to improve access to justice and dispute settlement

Strategies		Key Activities
Strategic objective: Improve efficiency and inclusiveness the Court's in dispute resolution and dispensation of justice		
2.1	Enhanced access to justice	Sensitisation of MSs Court systems on provisions of articles 26, 30 for referring cases touching on regional integration to CCJ
		Establish legal aid schemes to back up ADR
2.2	Regional Partnerships	Leverage articles 26, 30 of COMESA Treaty and those of other REC Courts jurisdictions to hear complaints to enhance the operations of the Court
		Explore mechanisms to leverage Articles 26 and 30 of the COMESA Treaty to enhance the Court's jurisdiction and operations
		Sensitising Member States' court systems on the provisions for referring cases related to regional integration to the CCJ
	Virtual Hearings	Enhanced remote access capabilities
	Rotational court sittings in MSs	Enhanced access to justice, and sensitisation on CCJ
2.3	Benchmark and collaborate with similar Courts	Partnerships to build synergies with related jurisdictions
	Benchmarking regional/global best practices for improved access to justice	Review legal frameworks to include reference to WTO DSM and AfCFTA DSM
2.4	Strengthen judicial collaboration and ADR mechanism	Exploration of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) options to settle conflicts between RECs and MSs, in settlement of disputes
		Sensitisation and training on existing opportunities in the Treaty to entrench legality of regional commitments
		Joint review of the ADR operations to harness synergies with CCJ in upholding and reinforcing the rule of law - Partnerships and synergies
		Update Procedures and Arb. rules to align with changes in the operational environment
3	Strategic issue (3): institutional strengthening and capacity building,	
	Strategic objective (1): To enhance institutional structure and capacity of the Court,	
3.1	Enhance skills and competencies through training and collaboration.	Undertake needs assessments and prioritise key interventions
		Capacity building and skills upgrading on new and emerging issues

	Strategies	Key Activities
3.3	Build strong judicial institutional resilience	Explore Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) options that clarifying the separation of powers and with cross-border enforcement potentials
		Build strong business continuity strategies
		Update policies and operational procedures, data protection and knowledge management, occupational health and safety, Judicial code of conduct, emergency responses, etc
		Further digitalisation of the operational systems
3.4	Structural reforms and alignments	Sign up on tripartite shared partnership protocols
		Strengthen collaboration mechanisms to leverage synergies and coordination
Strategic Objective (2): To improve the financial position of the Court		
3.5	Build a resource mobilisation strategy to diversify sources of funding in a sustainable way	Explore alternative sources of funding that do not undermine the independence of the Court
		Exploring programme-based partnerships to raise additional resources especially those on emerging issues
		Developing innovative funding mechanisms, such fee for service
		Strengthening financial management systems, in part through digitalization
3.6	Improve governance, risk and controls	Conduct risk management and mitigation measures
		Strengthen internal controls
4	Strategic issue (4): Streamlining and strengthening the Courts operations	
Strategic objective: To Streamline and strengthen the Courts operations		
4.1	Lobby MSs for the Court premises that includes courtrooms and Judges chambers	Identify national link institutions to support CCJ operations
4.2	Continuous update of the Court's operating policies, rules, and procedures	Establish digital sub-registries and facilitate web-based connectivity for posting rulings in real time
		Regular policy updates and complementary support procedures and rules
5	Strategic issue (5): Enhanced Visibility, Communication, And Stakeholder Engagement	
Strategic objective: To enhance the visibility of the Court		

	Strategies	Key Activities
5.1	Enhance the court users' satisfaction	Undertake regular user satisfaction surveys and publish results in different media outlets
		Explore population segment outreach approaches in seeking their views
		Explore virtual meetings, public seminars, legal dissemination, medial relationship monitoring in wide dissemination for increased stakeholder outreach and engagement
5.2	Increase engagement of court users and other stakeholders with feedback on regular basis	Short opinion polls on topical issues doubling up in enhancing the visibility of the Court
5.3	Explore alternative ways of reaching beneficiaries of COMESA programmes	Leverage social media, website interconnectivity with related institutions
6	Strategic issue (6): Information and Communication Technology Integration	
	Strategic objective: To enhance the ICT Infrastructure connectivity and application of digital tools	
6.1	Achieve full digital transformation	Infrastructure gap analysis
		Identification of suitable judicial digital tools for service delivery to digitalise the Courts operations
		Hard and soft infrastructure enhancement
		Staff training on ICT to achieve automation of the Court
6.2	Dissemination of CCJ law	Quarterly CCJ Legal Journals
		Regular report publications
		Publications of court proceedings and rulings

PART V:

IMPLEMENTING THE 2026 - 2030
CORPORATE STRATEGY

5.0 THE CORPORATE STRATEGY

This section outlines the core elements of the COMESA Court of Justice's (CCJ) corporate strategy for the period 2026-2030. It provides a framework for how the Court will operationalise its Strategic Plan to achieve its vision of "A world-class court advancing justice and regional integration responsive to changes in the operational environment" and mission "To uphold the rule of law by ensuring equitable interpretation and application of COMESA Treaty provisions, resolving disputes transparently, and fostering regional cohesion through judicial excellence and innovation". The strategy takes on board developments within continental economic integration architecture and the evolving changes in the global business environment. Effective implementation requires a clear understanding of responsibilities, optimal allocation of resources, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This section aims to provide clarity and guidance to all stakeholders involved in the Court's operations and strategic direction.

By effectively implementing this Corporate Strategy, the COMESA Court of Justice will be well-positioned to achieve its strategic objectives for 2026-2030, further solidifying its crucial role in promoting regional integration, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring access to justice within the COMESA region.

5.1 Strategic Overview and Guiding Principles

At the heart of the 2026-2030 corporate strategy lies a commitment to enhancing the CCJ's responsiveness to a dynamic operational environment, bolstering its capacity to deliver justice efficiently and inclusively, strengthening its institutional foundations, increasing its visibility and engagement with stakeholders, and fully integrating information and communication technology into its core functions. This strategic thrust is directly aligned with the six key strategic issues identified in the Strategy: (1) Improving Responsiveness to the changes in the Operational Environment, (2) Enhancing the Dispensation of Justice, (3) Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building, (4) Streamlining and Strengthening the Court's Operations, (5) Enhancing the Visibility of the Court, Communication, and wider Stakeholder Engagement, and (6) Enhancing ICT Infrastructure integration and Application of Digital Tools.

The Court's core values of Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Accessibility, Adaptability, and Accountability will guide the successful execution of this strategy. These values will underpin all activities and decision-making processes, ensuring that the CCJ operates with the highest standards of judicial and administrative excellence, thereby reinforcing its role as a cornerstone of regional integration and legal governance within the COMESA region.

5.2 Organisational Collaboration Framework

Effective implementation of the Strategy necessitates strong collaboration both within the CCJ and with external stakeholders. Internally, a collaborative structure, as outlined in the institutional review, will ensure that the First Instance and Appellate Divisions, along with the Registry led by the Registrar-CEO, work in concert towards achieving strategic objectives. Clear lines of communication, well-defined responsibilities, and a culture of teamwork will be paramount.

Externally, the CCJ recognises the critical role of partnerships with various entities. This includes:

- i) **COMESA Secretariat (SG):** To develop a tripartite shared partnership protocol facilitating delineated responsibilities and ensuring compliance with regional,

continental, and global commitments. Synergies with the Secretariat will be crucial for stakeholder sensitisation and review of legal systems.

- ii) **COMESA Member States (MSs):** For annual budget contributions, nomination of qualified Judges, enforcement of Court judgements, promotion of awareness of the CCJ, and delegation of legal issues related to regional integration. Enhanced stakeholder engagement with feedback mechanisms will be vital.
- iii) **Specialised COMESA Institutions and Agencies:** To foster synergies and avoid duplication of effort in areas of mutual interest.
- iv) **Other Regional Economic Communities (RECs):** To share best practices and explore opportunities for collaboration, particularly with courts like the East Africa Court of Justice (EACJ) and the ECOWAS Court.
- v) **Development Partners:** To secure extra-budgetary funding and technical assistance for institutional strengthening and specific projects, such as ICT upgrades.
- vi) **National Courts and Tribunals:** To strengthen cooperation, promote awareness of Article 30 referrals, and facilitate the enforcement of CCJ judgements.
- vii) **The Private Sector:** To understand their needs and ensure their interests are considered in COMESA decision-making processes, as well as to position the CCJ as a relevant forum for resolving AfCFTA-related disputes.
- viii) **Legal Fraternities and Chartered Institute of Arbitrators:** To enhance expertise in dispute resolution and potentially explore ADR mechanisms.

The collaboration and consultation levels to inform, involve and collaborate determines the hierarchy of engagement.

5.3 Resource Mobilisation and Financial Sustainability Strategy

Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the CCJ is paramount for the effective delivery of its mandate and the implementation of the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan. While contributions from Member States will remain a core source of funding, the Court will actively pursue a diversified resource mobilisation strategy to reduce over-reliance on these contributions and enhance its financial resilience. Key elements of this strategy will include:

- i) **Exploring programme-based partnerships:** Developing targeted project proposals that align with the priorities of potential donors and cooperating partners, particularly in emerging areas such as digital trade, climate change, and gender justice.
- ii) **Developing innovative funding mechanisms:** Investigating the feasibility of alternative funding sources, such as service fees (where appropriate and legally permissible), and exploring the potential for establishing trust funds or endowments, drawing lessons from other similar courts like the Caribbean Court of Justice.
- iii) **Enhancing efficiency in resource utilisation:** Leveraging ICT and digital tools to

streamline operations, reduce costs, and improve the efficiency of resource allocation.

- iv) **Strengthening financial management systems:** Implementing robust financial rules, procedures, and audit mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability, and the prudent management of all financial resources.
- v) **Digitalization:** To reduce financial expenses to support delivery.

A detailed resource mobilisation strategy document, outlining specific targets, responsible parties, and timelines, will be developed and regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness.

5.4 Enhancing Visibility, Communication, and Stakeholder Engagement

Improving the visibility of the CCJ and fostering stronger engagement with its diverse stakeholders is crucial for enhancing its relevance, impact, and public trust. The Court recognises that limited awareness of its mandate, jurisdiction, and access procedures hinders its utilisation. The 2026-2030 strategy will therefore prioritise proactive and targeted communication and outreach initiatives, including:

- i) **Operationalising the communication strategy:** Fully implementing the drafted communication strategy to ensure consistent and effective messaging across all platforms.
- ii) **Leveraging digital platforms and social media:** Expanding the Court's online presence through a user-friendly website and active engagement on social media platforms to disseminate information, share updates, and reach a wider audience, including businesses and youth.
- iii) **Developing and disseminating user-friendly materials:** Creating accessible information brochures, FAQs, and other resources explaining the Court's mandate, jurisdiction, rules of procedure, and how to access its services.
- iv) **Conducting targeted sensitisation programmes:** Organising workshops, seminars, and webinars for key stakeholder groups, including national judiciaries, legal professionals, business associations, and civil society organisations, to raise awareness and build capacity on relevant aspects of COMESA law and the CCJ's role.
- v) **Publishing annual impact reports:** Regularly producing and disseminating reports highlighting the Court's achievements, impact on regional integration, and key performance indicators to demonstrate its value and accountability.
- vi) **Hosting regional judicial forums:** Organising events to facilitate dialogue and knowledge sharing among judges, legal experts, and other stakeholders on emerging legal trends and issues related to regional integration.
- vii) **Implementing feedback mechanisms:** Establishing regular user satisfaction surveys and other feedback mechanisms to gather insights into stakeholder needs and expectations, and to inform people of continuous improvement of the Court's services.

- viii) **Strengthening media relations:** Proactively engaging with the media to enhance public understanding of the CCJ's work and its contribution to regional integration.

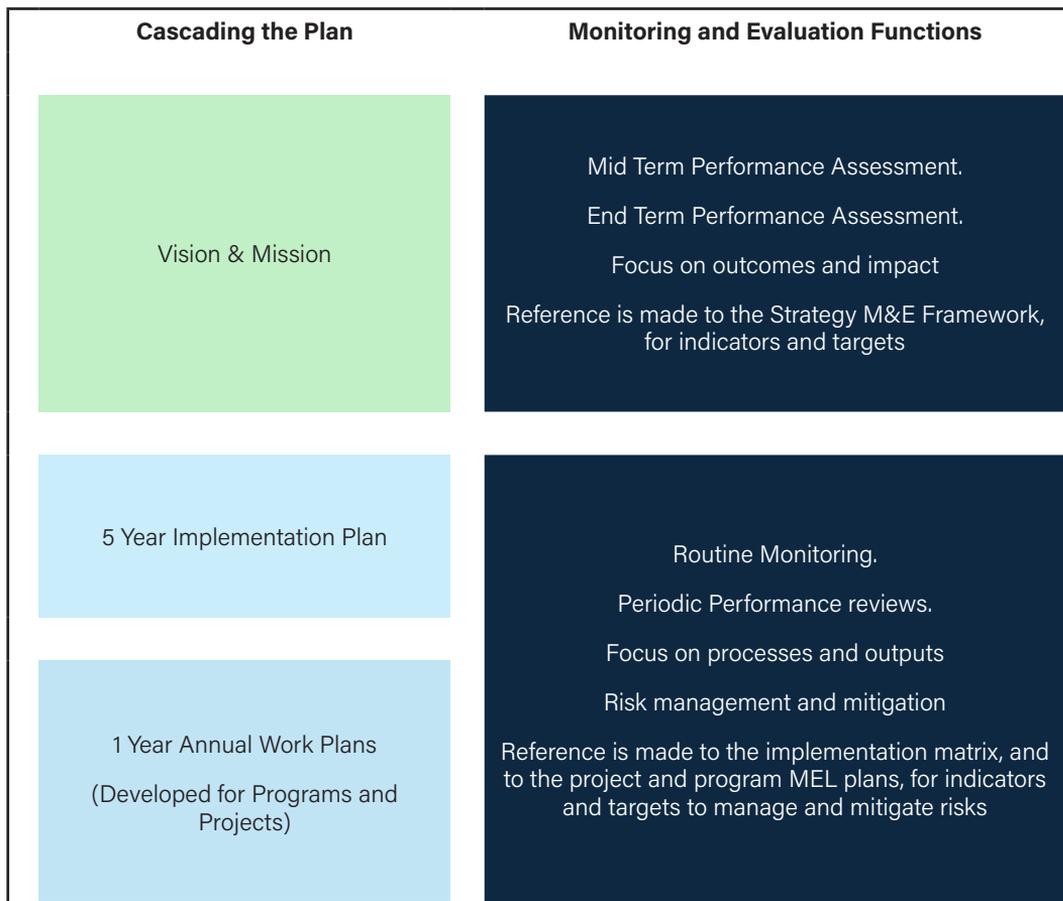
5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework

A robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework is essential to track progress towards the achievement of the strategic objectives outlined in the Strategy, assess the effectiveness of implemented interventions, identify challenges and lessons learned, and ensure accountability. The M&E framework for the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan will be guided by the following principles:

- i) **Results-based approach:** Focusing on measuring the outcomes and impact of the Court's activities in relation to its strategic objectives.
- ii) **Use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Adopting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound indicators to track progress in key areas such as case resolution time, stakeholder satisfaction levels, resource mobilisation efforts, and the implementation of ICT initiatives.
- iii) **Regular data collection and analysis:** Establishing systems for the systematic collection and analysis of data relevant to the agreed-upon KPIs, drawing on case management systems, stakeholder feedback surveys, financial reports, and other relevant sources.
- iv) **Periodic performance reviews:** Conducting regular reviews of progress against strategic objectives and KPIs, involving all relevant stakeholders, to identify successes, challenges, and areas requiring corrective action.
- v) **Mid-term and end-term evaluations:** Undertaking comprehensive evaluations at the mid-point and end of the strategic plan period to assess overall effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, building on the evaluation framework used for the previous Strategy. These evaluations will inform the development of future strategic plans.
- vi) **Reporting and communication of M&E findings:** Regularly communicating M&E findings to the Court's management, the Council of Ministers, Member States, and other stakeholders through progress reports, annual reports, and other appropriate channels to ensure transparency and accountability.
- vii) **Utilisation of evaluation findings for learning and adaptation:** Ensuring that the findings and recommendations from performance reviews and evaluations are used to inform decision-making, adapt strategies, and continuously improve the Court's operations and impact.

The M&E framework will be further detailed in a separate document, outlining specific KPIs, data collection methods, reporting timelines, and responsibilities.

Figure 1: M&E Framework



5.5.1 Implementation Matrix

In addition to tracking compliance with changes in the operational environment impacting on CCJ legal operations consistent with regional integration within the continental frameworks and in a globalising environment, the M&E framework for the CCJ 2026-2030 Strategy will track implementation of strategic issues and interventions. Special focus shall be dedicated to monitoring the effectiveness of the partnerships with MSs, synergies and alliances with regional and international related service providers and complemented with regular feedback from the users and beneficiaries of the Court systems.

An implementation Matrix annexed to this Strategy (Annex 1), presents the operational framework with annual plans, targets, resources requirements against expected impact and outputs are developed from. This implementation matrix provides a comprehensive framework for implementing the CCJ's Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The matrix addresses identified gaps and incorporated best practices for strategic implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Matrix Structure and Methodology

(a) Strategic Framework Alignment

The implementation matrix is structured around the six strategic issues identified in the CCJ Strategic Plan 2026-2030:

1. Responsiveness to Operational Environment Changes
2. Enhanced Dispensation of Justice
3. Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building
4. Streamlined Court Operations
5. Enhanced Visibility, Communication and Stakeholder Engagement
6. ICT Integration and Digital Transformation

(b) COMESA Integration Pillars Alignment

Each strategic issue is explicitly linked to COMESA's four pillars of integration:

1. Market Integration: Trade dispute resolution, competition law, intellectual property
2. Physical Connectivity: Infrastructure-related legal frameworks, cross-border enforcement
3. Productive Integration: Investment protection, industrial development legal support
4. Gender and Social Integration: Inclusive access to justice, gender-responsive legal frameworks

(c) Performance Measurement Framework

The matrix employs a two-tier indicator system:

1. Output Indicators: Immediate deliverables and products
2. Outcome Indicators: Medium-term changes and improvements

Implementation Timeline and Phasing

(a) Phase 1 (Year 1): Foundation and Preparation

1. Legal framework reviews and amendments
2. Training and capacity building programs
3. Institutional capacity assessments
4. ICT infrastructure and system development
5. Stakeholder engagement initiation

(b) Phase 2 (Years 2-3): Implementation and Expansion

1. Full operationalization of new systems
2. Sub-registry establishment
3. Enhanced service delivery
4. Enhanced ICT infrastructure

(c) Phase 3 (Years 4-5): Consolidation and Optimization

1. Performance optimization
2. Impact assessment and evaluation
3. Sustainability planning
4. Knowledge sharing and replication
5. Enhanced ICT to cope with new developments

Resource Mobilization Strategy**(a) Funding Sources**

1. Member State Contributions (70%): Core operational funding
2. Development Partner Support (20%): Program-specific funding
3. Fee-for-Service Revenue (5%): Court services and training
4. Other Sources (5%): Grants, partnerships, innovative financing

(b) Budget Allocation Principles

- 80% for core operations and administration
- 10% for capacity building and training
- 5% for ICT and infrastructure
- 5% for visibility and stakeholder engagement

Risk Management Framework**(a) Key Risk Categories**

1. Political and Security Risks: Geopolitical instability, Member State conflicts
2. Financial Risks: Funding shortfalls, currency risk
3. Operational Risks: Staff turnover, technology failures, lack of permanent court premises
4. Legal and Regulatory Risks: Jurisdictional conflicts, non-compliance with rules, Treaty amendments

(b) Mitigation Strategies

1. Regular stakeholder engagement
2. Diversified funding portfolio
3. Contingency planning and business continuity
4. Adaptive management approaches
5. Establishing proactive compliance programmes

5.5.2 Annual Work Plan

Within the implementation matrix in Annex 1, are indications of activities to be held annually, which can be further consolidated at departmental level with associated targets against which expenditure is allocated. The Court will develop five (5) annual work plans, with more specific details with specific activities to be done during a given year. The AWP's are prepared every year based on expected outputs, strategies, budget, and they must reflect achievements, impact and lessons learned in previous years. Further, the plan will be used for target setting by implementing departments or units, supervisors, and individual staff.

5.5.3 Budgeting

Annex 1 on the implementation Matrix also redistributes the budgeted resources against annual work plans. The budgeting cycle tied to the Court's annual work plans should be developed ahead of the budgeting cycle so that the annual budgets are driven by the priorities in the strategic Plan.

5.5.4 Communication of the Plan

Both the Court Administrator and Management are engaged during the formulation and approval of the strategy. The final Strategic Plan shall be communicated to all judges and staff, COMESA Secretariat and Organs, Council of Ministers, and Member States. The Court will adopt strategic communication to create awareness of the Strategic Plan among internal publics. This ensures stakeholders are regularly informed of the key highlights of the plan, and focusing on the relevant staff will understand what is expected of them in its implementation.

5.5.5 Financing the Plan

Annex 2 estimates potential available resources to the from the various options in section 5.5.1 based on Member State contributions and committed alternative additional resource potentials. The budget will factor in both recurrent and non-recurrent expenditures. Non-committed resources may be specified but cannot be assigned to any activity until assurance is obtained to avoid creating a pending bill, putting at risk the Courts, reputation at risk.

5.5.6 Court Structure

Based on the additional priorities in the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, the appropriate Court structure is presented in Annex 3.

5.6 Risk Analysis and critical Assumptions

To ensure that the CCJ can effectively fulfil its mandate and reinforce its role as a pivotal judicial organ within the COMESA framework, while focusing on its strategic priorities, and adapting to the changing operational environment, it will be critical to mitigating risks and optimising organisational and governance structures. The successful implementation of this Strategic Plan is premised on the continued resilience the organization has shown in ensuring adherence to the law and the adaptability of staff and judges to a changing operational environment.

4.5.1 Risk analysis

The major risk to the Courts operations relates to non-alignment of its legal framework to navigate its complex mandate within a rapidly changing regional landscape and related emerging issues in the operational environment. These include amending its legal framework to foster compliance with COMESA's expanded integration agenda and adaptations to the effects of climate change, geopolitical instability, and global economic shocks, which issues are reshaping trade, governance, and complexity of dispute settlements.

4.5.2 Critical Assumptions

The key assumptions underpinning the success of the Court's Strategic Plan 2026-2030 include:

- i) Continued judicial independence of the Court within the changing operational environment.
- ii) Reforming its jurisdiction mandate in Alignment of the Court's legal framework, with the expanded COMESA outreach within the overlapping jurisdictions in the AUC AfCFTA, TFTA and evolving economic priorities and global changes associated with climate change, impact of technological advancements on businesses including trade, geopolitical shocks and shifts with ramifications on business, all of which may give rise to disputes, within the ambit of the Court's operations.
- iii) Institutional reforms to align the institutional capacity, organizational structure, policies, systems, and procedures to foster operational efficiency and resilience in aligning dynamic changes in the regional and global operational environment.
- iv) Access to sustainable financing and human resources and partnerships
- v) Training of both the administration and management on new incremental issues on the mandate of the Court
- vi) Digitalization of the Courts operations and systems for enhanced efficiency in resource use, information dissemination, and improved visibility of the Court.
- vii) Innovative partnerships to entrench wider stakeholder involvement in utilizing Court's dispute settlement processes.
- viii) Benchmarking practices for the Court to adapt and remain aligned with regional, continental, and global commitments.
- ix) Development of a tripartite shared partnership protocol to facilitate delineated responsibilities among the Secretariat-General (SG), member states, and CCJ, ensuring compliance with regional, continental, and global commitments

5.7 Monitoring, Evaluation, Review, and Control Plan

A robust M&E framework is essential to track progress, measure impact, and ensure accountability standards in the implementation of the 2026–2030 strategy. The Court will adopt clear performance indicators and transparent reporting mechanisms to refine operations and maintain stakeholder confidence. Regular performance evaluation and impact assessments aligned to the annual work plans and budgets will ensure adaptive management, enabling the Court to respond dynamically to emerging challenges and opportunities. These reports shall be shared with the Administration and reported on through COMESA governance structure on annual basis.

5.8 Cascading Framework

To achieve the desired objectives of the Court, a cascading framework that extends from the corporate strategy and work plan with the implementation matrix forming the basis for the corporate score card. Departments or units shall derive their extended Annual Work Plans from the corporate plan, with additional and relevant implementation details and activities incorporated that are aligned to the corporate strategy.

Employee performance appraisal instruments embodied in the employees' personal objectives and defined by their descriptions and work assignments shall be clearly aligned both individually and collectively to the employees' departmental or unit plans. As employees meet their personal objectives

and perform their duties, their departmental or unit performance targets and objectives shall equally be met. This shall ensure that the overall Corporate Objectives and outcomes are realized.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Implementation Matrix Operationalizing CCJ Strategic Objectives

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level
RESPONSIVENESS TO OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT CHANGES	Enhance and align the Court's jurisdiction mandate with COMESA REC pillars of integration	Legal Framework Review	Conduct a comprehensive study on the Treaty and other COMESA Legal instruments to clarify on the jurisdiction and mandate of the Court	Review report with recommendations to engage Policy Organs to review the Court's jurisdiction and mandate	Number of legal instruments reviewed and amended	3	-	2	1	-	-	225	150	75	-	-	-	Registry	Market Integration	Medium
							5%	10%	20%	30%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
				Identify ways to leverage the Court's jurisdiction and mandate to enhance its role as a regional court.	Expanded jurisdiction of the Court	Increased number of cases	30%												All pillars	Low
		Bench-marking Study	Conduct benchmarking studies	Benchmarking studies conducted with best practice recommendations	Number of benchmarking studies and best practice recommendations implemented	10	2	2	2	2	2	400	80	80	80	80	80	Registry/HRA/Fin	All Pillars	Low
		Tripartite Protocol	Engage the TFTA to incorporate legal frameworks that integrate the CCJ in dispute resolution	CCJ integrated in the TFTA DSM legal frameworks	Signed legal frameworks	1	-	-	1	-	-	150	50	50	50	50	50	Registry	All Pillars	Medium

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level			
	Align Court mandate with AfCFTA, WTO, CFTA, WTO, TFTA and emerging global Issues	AfcFTA, WTO and TFTA Integration Study	Conduct comprehensive comparative study on AfCFTA/ WTO and TFTA dispute mechanisms	comprehensive comparative study	Approved comprehensive comparative study and recommendations	1	1	-	-	-	-	50	50	-	-	-	-	Registry	Market Integration	Medium			
			Conduct engagement with the AfCFTA, WTO and TFTA secretariat to establish collaborations	MOU signed	Number of MOU signed	3	-	2	1	-	-	-	250	50	50	50	50	50	Registry	Market Integration	Medium		
			Develop training modules for staff and Judges on climate-related trade disputes and digital commerce ADP, and other emerging issues	Enhanced knowledge on the emerging issues	Number of trainings	3	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	300	100	100	-	100	-	Registry/IT	Productive Integration	Low	
		Stakeholder Sensitization		Conduct sensitization workshops for national institutions and legal fraternities	Enhanced stakeholder awareness	Number of workshops conducted in MSS	10	2	2	2	2	2	750	150	150	150	150	150	Registry/HRA/Fin/IT	All Pillars	Medium		

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level		
ENHANCED DISPENSATION OF JUSTICE	Improve efficiency and inclusiveness in dispute resolution	Access Enhancement	Establish robust case management system	Robust Case Management system established	Case Management System	1	1	1	1	1	1	130	50	20	20	20	20	IT/ Registry	All Pillars	Medium		
							10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	320	50	60	65	70	75	ICT/ Registry	All Pillars	Low		
							2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium		
		Rotational court sittings in MSs	Increase rotational court sittings	Rotational court sittings in MSs	Increase rotational court sittings	Enhanced access to justice	Num-ber of rotational court sittings	10	2	2	2	2	2	2	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium
									2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium
									2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium
									2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium
									2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium
									2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium
									2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium
									2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium
									2	2	2	2	2	3500	600	650	700	750	800	Registry	All Pillars	Medium

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level	
ENHANCED DISPENSATION OF JUSTICE	Strengthen judicial collaboration and ADR mechanism	Awareness creation amongst MS National courts	Conduct awareness campaign to leverage Article 30 for enhanced jurisdiction for preliminary rulings	Awareness campaigns conducted	Number of awareness campaigns conducted	10	2	2	2	2	2	500	100	100	100	100	100			Low	
			Build partnerships with international and regional courts	Active collaboration agreements	Number of partnership agreements signed	5	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	250	50	50	50	50	50	Registry	All Pillars
		ADR mechanism	Implement Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism established under the CCJ Rules of Procedure	Operational ADR mechanisms	ADR mechanism operationalised	ADR mechanism operationalised	100%	50%	50%	-	-	-	-	950	50	150	200	250	300	Registry	Market Integration
Develop and Maintain ADR Rosters for arbitrators, mediators and conciliators	ADR rosters established and maintained		Approved ADR Roster	Approved ADR Roster	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Registry	Market Integration	Medium
			Review the COMESA Court Arbitration Rules 2018	Revised COMESA Court Arbitration Rules	Approved COMESA Court Arbitration Rules	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	HR	All Pillars	Low

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level			
INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY BUILDING	Enhance skills, competencies	Effective Human Resource Planning	Carry out staffing gap assessment to guide recruitment	Assessment report	Number of assessments	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	HR	All Pillars	Medium			
			Conduct training needs assessment designed to improve the Courts and individual performance	Training Needs reports	Number of training needs assessments completed	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	HR.	All Pillars	Medium		
			Conduct workplace survey on current challenges of organisational culture of the court, and develop the future organisational culture	Positive Organisational Culture	Survey Report	2	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	20	10	-	10	-	HR	All Pillars	Medium	
			Develop and implement Leadership Development Programme to support Management	Leadership Development Programme developed and implemented	Number of training on leadership	2	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	20	10	-	10	-	HR	All Pillars	Low	
			Review Performance Management system to align with objectives of the Court	Performance Management System reviewed	Improved performance record	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	250	50	50	50	50	HR	All Pillars	Medium	
			Develop an effective Workplace Diversity and Inclusion policy	Policy of workplace diversity and Inclusion	Number of Policy	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	30	15	-	15	-	HR	All Pillars	Medium	
			Conduct continuous training on existing and emerging issues (e.g., climate-related trade disputes, digital commerce)	Trained judges and staff	Number of trainings undertaken	10	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	500	100	100	100	100	HR	All Pillars	Medium	

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level
	Review and develop organisational policies and procedures	Organisational Structure Review	Review the Court's organizational structure	Revised organizational structure	Approved organizational structure	1 structure	1	-	1	-	-	100	-	-	100	-	-	Registry/HR/Fin	All Pillars	Medium
Develop and implement change process that provide for continuity in the Courts Operations			Change Management Programme developed	Continuous report on Change Management	2	1	-	25	-	25	1	-	50	-	-	25	-	HR	All Pillars	Low
Business Continuity		Develop and implement disaster recovery and business continuity plan	Approved disaster recovery and business continuity plan	Number of approved disaster recovery and business continuity plan	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	15	-	15	-	-	HR	All Pillars	Low
		Develop Employee Wellness Strategy and implementation Plan	Policy on Employee Wellness	Number of Programmes	5	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	100	20	20	20	20	20	HR	All Pillars

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level
		Judicial Code of Conduct	Develop the Judicial Code of Conduct	Approved Judicial Code of Conduct	Code of Conduct	1	1	1	-	-	-	80	-	80	-	-	-	Registry	All Pillars	Low
		Knowledge Management and information resource centre of the Court	Develop Knowledge Management Policy	Knowledge Management Policy	1 Policy	1	1	1	-	-	-	25	-	25	-	-	-	All Dept.	All Pillars	Low
		Data protection and privacy	Develop Data Protection and privacy Policy	Data Protection and privacy Policy developed and approved	1 Policy	1	1	-	-	-	-	30	30	-	-	-	-	All Dept.	All Pillars	High
		Evacuation and emergency	Develop evacuation and emergency policies and procedures.	Evacuation & Emergency Policy and procedure	Policy and procedure	1	1	1	-	-	-	25	-	25	-	-	-	All Dept.	All Pillars	Low

Risk Level	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
COMESA Pillar	All Pillars	All Pillars	All Pillars	All Pillars	All pillars
Responsibility	Finance/RMO	Finance/RMO	Finance/RMO	Finance/RMO	All Dept
Budget Y5 (\$000)	10	-	10	-	-
Budget Y4 (\$000)	10	-	10	-	-
Budget Y3 (\$000)	10	-	10	-	-
Budget Y2 (\$000)	10	-	20	-	-
Budget Y1 (\$000)	10	10	20	20	-
Budget (\$000)	50	10	70	20	-
Year 5	-	-	0.5	0.2M	1
Year 4	-	-	0.5	0.2M	1
Year 3	-	-	0.5	0.2M	1
Year 2	2	-	0.5	0.2M	1
Year 1	2	1	0.25	0.2M	1
5-Year Target	4	1	2.5M	1M	5
Performance Indicator	Number of new funding sources identified	No of report	Amount of extra-budgetary funds secured	Revenue generated from new mechanisms	No. of budgets
Expected Output	Diversified funding sources	Stakeholder mapping conducted	Extra-budgetary funds	New revenue streams	Annual budget approved
Activity	Explore sources for extra-budgetary resource	Conduct stakeholder mapping	Explore program-based partnerships to raise additional resources	Develop innovative funding mechanisms	Compile annual budget of the Court
Intervention Strategy	Extra-budgetary Resource		Pro-gram-Based Partnerships	Innovative Funding	Align budget with strategy
Strategic Objective	Improve the financial position and financial management of the Court				
Strategic Issues					

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level
		Improve contribution collection	Engage MS on assessed contributions	Settlement of assessed contributions improved	MS contribution status and reminders	10	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	Registrar/Finance	All Pillars	High
			Prepare regular management reports	Management reports	No of reports	20	4	4	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	Finance	All Pillars	Low
		Strengthen Financial Management Systems	Prepare annual financial statements of the Court	Financial Statements	No of reports	4	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	Finance	All Pillars	Low
			Facilitate internal and external audits	Improved financial transparency	Audit compliance rate	4	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	Finance	All Pillars	Low
		Ensure prudent management of financial resources	Budget control through expenditure tracking	Budget control reports	Number of reports	20	4	4	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	Finance	All Pillars	Low

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level	
STREAM-LINED AND STRENGTHENED COURT OPERATIONS	Improve governance, risk and controls	Risk management and mitigation measures	Conduct risks assessment of the Court	Updated risk register	Annual review of risk register	5	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	All Dept.	All Pillars	Medium	
		Strengthen internal controls	Implement internal and external audit recommendations	internal and external Audit Recommendations implemented	% of Implementation	100%													Registry/Finance/	All Pillars	Medium
STREAM-LINED AND STRENGTHENED COURT OPERATIONS	Stream-line and strengthen the Court's operations	Lobby MSs for the Court premises that includes courtrooms and Judges chambers	Bring the matter of the need for court premises with judges chambers to the concerned Policy Organs and MS	Court premises with courtrooms and judges chambers established	No of engagement	3	1	2	-	-	-	120	40	80	-	-	-	JP/Registry	All Pillars	Low	
		Policies, Rules and Procedures Update	Continuous update of the Court's operating policies, rules, and procedures	Up-to-date operational framework	Number of policies, rules, procedures reviewed and updated	10 updates	2	2	2	2	2	2	750	150	150	150	150	150	All Dept.	All Pillars	Low

Strategic Issues	ENHANCED VISIBILITY, COMMUNICATION, AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT					
Strategic Objective	Enhance the visibility of the Court					
Intervention Strategy	User Satisfaction Surveys	Targeted Outreach	ESG programmes	Stakeholder MOUs	Virtual Stakeholder Meetings	
Activity	Undertake regular user satisfaction surveys and publish results	Explore population segment outreach approaches	Establish community programmes through CSR activities	Conclude memoranda of understanding with key stakeholders	Hold virtual meetings with selected stakeholders	
Expected Output	Court users' satisfaction survey undertaken	Target population segments identified	Established ESG programmes	Concluded MOUs	Increased stakeholder engagement	
Performance Indicator	Number of satisfaction surveys undertaken	Number of meetings held with target segments	Number of CSR programmes undertaken	Number of MOUs signed	Number of virtual meetings held	
5-Year Target	10	5	5	10	20 meetings	
Year 1	2	1	1	2	5	
Year 2	2	1	1	2	5	
Year 3	2	1	1	2	5	
Year 4	2	1	1	2	5	
Year 5	2	1	1	2	5	
Budget (\$000)	75	250	50	250	75	
Budget Y1 (\$000)	15	50	10	50	15	
Budget Y2 (\$000)	15	50	10	50	15	
Budget Y3 (\$000)	15	50	10	50	15	
Budget Y4 (\$000)	15	50	10	50	15	
Budget Y5 (\$000)	15	50	10	50	15	
Responsibility	Registry	Registry	All depts	Registry	Registry/IT	
COMESA Pillar	All Pillars	Gender/	Gender/social Integration	All Pillars	All	
Risk Level	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level
		Social Media Campaign	Launch a multilingual social media campaign targeting businesses and youth	Enhanced public legal education	Social media engagement rate	30% increase	5%	15%	20%	25%	30%	50	10	10	10	10	10	Registry/IT	All	Medium
		Publicity Seminars	Undertake publicity seminars conferences, trade fairs and other outreach programs	Increased awareness of Court	Number of publicity seminars and other outreach programs	25	5	5	5	5	5	500	100	100	100	100	100	Registry/HRA/	All	Medium
		Court Publications	Develop CCJ case digest and increase Court publications	Published case digest and other Court publications	Number of publications released	2 publications	1	-	-	1	-	20	10	-	-	10	-	Registry/IT	All	Low
		Website Updates	Provide updates of the Court's activities on the website and social media platforms	Timely information dissemination	Bi-Weekly updates of website	130	26	26	26	26	26	50	10	10	10	10	10	Registry/IT	All	Low
		Legal Journals Dissemination	Disseminate CCJ law through legal journals	Widely accessible legal information	Number of legal journals published	5 journals	1	1	1	1	1	50	10	10	10	10	10	Registry/IT	All Pillars	Low
		Media Relations & Monitoring	Media monitoring and response systems	Improved public perception and information accuracy	Number of media monitoring reports produced	20	4	4	4	4	4	75	15	15	15	15	15	PRMO	Effective and efficient	Low

Strategic Issues	Strategic Objective	Intervention Strategy	Activity	Expected Output	Performance Indicator	5-Year Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget (\$000)	Budget Y1 (\$000)	Budget Y2 (\$000)	Budget Y3 (\$000)	Budget Y4 (\$000)	Budget Y5 (\$000)	Responsibility	COMESA Pillar	Risk Level		
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION	Achieve full digital transformation	Infrastructure Gap Analysis	Identify ICT infrastructure gaps	Specified infrastructure gaps	Infrastructure gaps report	1 report	1	-	-	-	-	20	20	-	-	-	-	IT	All Pillars	Low		
			Enhance hardware, software, licenses, subscription, and cybersecurity	Installed and maintained hardware, software systems, licenses, new subscription	Percentage of systems installed	100%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	400	80	80	80	80	80	IT	All Pillars	Medium
		Digitalization of Operations	Adopt digitalisation of Court operations to enhance service delivery	Enhanced digital service delivery	Percentage of operations digitalised	75%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	550	110	110	110	110	110	IT	All Pillars	Medium
			Automate key Court processes	Automated workflows	Number of automated processes	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	125	75	-	-	-	-	IT	All Pillars	Medium
		Staff training on ICT	Undertake regular training of staff in line with current and emerging technologies and trends	Training report	Number of trainings	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25	5	5	5	5	5	IT/HR	All pillars	Low
			ICT Team Capacity Building	Enhanced capacity team	Number of trainings undertaken	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	125	25	25	25	25	25	HR/ IT	All Pillars	Low
														12,750	2,650	2,615	2,660	2,535	2,470			

Annex 2: Project Performance

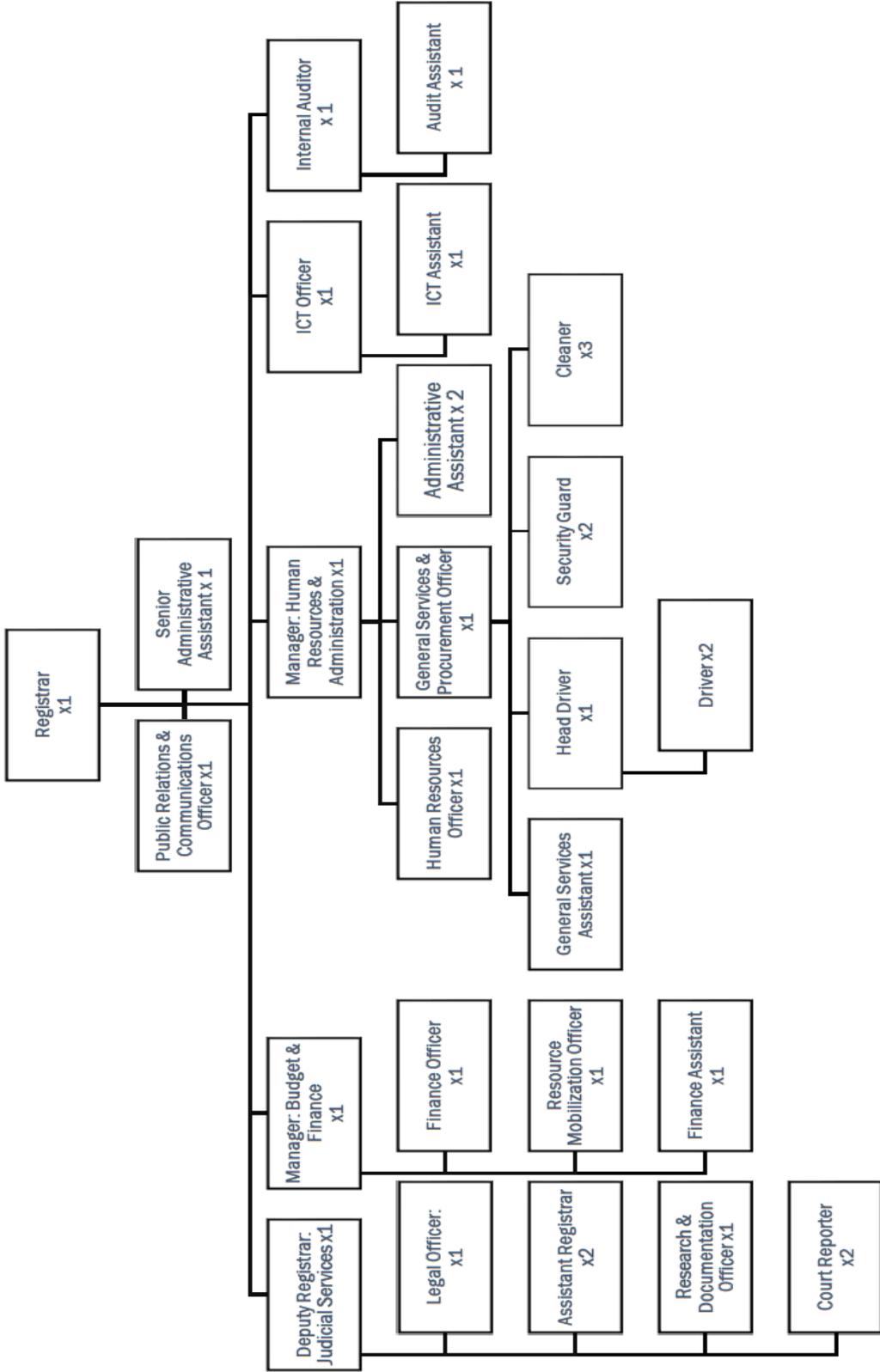
A: Financial Resource Requirements

Strategic Issues and Strategies	Projected Budget (USD "000")					
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total
Strategic Issue 1: Responsiveness to Operational Environment Changes						
Enhance and align the Court's jurisdiction mandate with COMESA REC pillars of integration	330	205	130	80	80	825
Align Court mandate with AfCFTA, WTO, TFTA and emerging global issues	300	300	200	300	200	1,300
	630	505	330	380	280	2,125
Strategic Issue 2: ENHANCED DISPENSATION OF JUSTICE						
Improve efficiency and inclusiveness in dispute resolution	700	730	785	840	895	3,950
Strengthen judicial collaboration and ADR mechanism	200	300	350	400	450	1,700
	900	1,030	1,135	1,240	1,345	5,650
Strategic Issue 3: Institutional strengthening and capacity building						
Enhance skills, competencies	185	150	150	185	150	820
Review and develop organisational policies and procedures	75	165	120	45	20	425
Improve the financial position and financial management of the Court	60	30	20	20	20	150
Improve governance, risk and controls	-	-	-	-	-	-
	320	345	290	250	190	1,395
Strategic issue 4: STREAMLINED AND STRENGTHENED COURT OPERATIONS						
Streamline and strengthen the Court's operations	190	230	150	150	150	870
Strategic Issue 5: ENHANCED VISIBILITY, COMMUNICATION, AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT						
Enhance the visibility of the Court	295	285	285	295	285	1,445
Strategic issue 6: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION						
Achieve full digital transformation	315	220	270	220	220	1,245

B: Resource Flow and Gaps

Resource Flow and Gaps	Resource Flow and Gaps (USD'000)					Total
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Strategic Plan Requirements (As per Financial Resource Requirements)	2,650	2,615	2,460	2,535	2,470	12,730
Recurrent Requirements	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	6,000
	3,850	3,815	3,660	3,735	3,670	18,730
Financial Plan						
Member State contributions (70%)	2,695	2,671	2,562	2,615	2,569	13,112
Development Partner Support (20%)	770	763	732	747	734	3,746
Fee-for-Service Revenue (5%)	192	191	183	187	183	936
Other Sources (5%)	192	191	183	187	183	936

Annex 3: Court Organisational Structure



Annex 4: Strategic Planning Team

A: COMESA Court of Justice

Honourable Nyambura L. Mbatia	Registrar
Honourable Philippe H. Ruboneza	Deputy Registrar
Mr. Essayas Simon	Manager Budget & Finance
Ms. Lina Hoareau	Manager Human Resources & Administration
Honourable Asiimwe Anthony	Assistant Registrar
Mr. Bedlu Asfaw	IT Officer
Mr. Adow Abdi Ibrahim	Internal Audit Officer
Ms. Mutinta Chinganya	Legal Officer
Mr. Raymond Musyoka Munyao	General Services and Procurement Officer
Ms. Lubaba Sinnary	Senior Administrative Assistant

B: Dr Margaret K. Chemengich

Assisted by Andrew O. Olale



COMESA Court of Justice
Evexia Commercial Complex, Church Road
P.O. Box 37870, Lusaka, Zambia
Email: info@comesacourt.org
Website: www.comesacourt.org