



Newsletter

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Revolutionizing Export Promotion: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Streamlining Global Trade

By Gertrude Mirobi: GMirobi@brand.ke

In today's interconnected world, exporting goods and services is critical to the success of Kenya's economy given its significant GDP contribution. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful tool for streamlining global trade and improving export promotion. The technology is being used to analyze large volumes of data, automate manual tasks, and enhance decision-making processes.

Kenyan SMEs can leverage the power of AI in the following ways;

Market analysis

AI tools can be helpful in identifying potential export markets for Kenyan products. AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data to identify consumer trends, preferences, and opportunities for growth. By analyzing data from multiple sources, including social media, online search queries, and customer feedback, AI-powered market analysis tools can provide

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businesses with valuable insights into new markets they can target.

Supply chain optimization

AI can be used to optimize the supply chain for export products, reducing costs and increasing efficiency. Predictive analytics, a branch of AI, assists businesses anticipate demand, adjust production and shipping schedules accordingly, and optimize inventory levels. This can help businesses to reduce lead times, avoid stockouts, and increase customer satisfaction.

Social media listening

AI-powered social media listening tools identify potential customers and markets based on social media conversations and trends. This can help SMEs target their marketing efforts more effectively and identify new markets.

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Customs and trade compliance

AI can help businesses ensure compliance with customs and trade regulations when exporting products. Compliance with regulations is a critical aspect of international trade, and non-compliance can lead to costly delays and penalties. AI-powered compliance tools can detect and flag potential compliance issues, reducing the risk of such delays and penalties.

Customer engagement

Chatbots and customer service tools powered by AI provide instant responses to customer queries and provide personalized recommendations, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. This can help businesses drive sales thus expanding the country's export market share.

Product recommendations

AI-powered product recommendation engines are used to suggest products to customers based on their previous purchases and browsing history. This can help SMEs reach new customers who may not have been aware of their products before.

Quality control

AI tools monitor the quality of exportable products, ensuring they meet international standards and regulations. This can help businesses avoid costly product recalls and maintain their reputation in international markets.

Price optimization

AI can be used to optimize pricing strategies, taking into account market demand, competitor pricing, and other factors. This can help businesses maximize profits while remaining competitive in international markets.

AI-powered language translation

SMEs can use AI-powered language translation tools to communicate with potential customers in different languages. This can help SMEs reach new markets and expand their customer base beyond their local region.

Overall, AI is helping companies become more competitive in the global marketplace by improving their ability to identify and capitalize on export opportunities. As the technology continues to advance, we can expect to see even greater improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of export promotion.

Exploitation and Maximization of the Blue Economy to Increase Kenya's Exports Basket

By Maureen Mambo MMambo@brand.ke

The Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency held a caucus meeting with various stakeholders in the country's Blue Economy sector. The Caucus meeting targeting Mombasa and Kwale Counties was aimed at consolidating efforts towards the creation of a quantifiable resource base and developing a common strategy for sustainable exploitation and maximization of the Blue Economy and maritime resources for export.

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Kenya's Blue Economy includes sea, ocean, lakes, rivers, and water masses which have become the new economic fronts for growth both for maritime economies and global economy in general. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that the quantified value is currently estimated at US\$ 1.5 trillion and, is poised to grow to US\$ 3.0 trillion by 2030 securing an additional 9 million full-time jobs.

The total global supply for fish, crustaceans, and molluscs products in 2021 was USD 133.9 billion up from USD 112.1 billion in 2020. Overall global supply for fish, crustaceans, and molluscs has been growing at annual average of 3.0% between 2018 and 2021 and grew by 19.4% between 2020 and 2021. World

leading fish, crustaceans, and molluscs exporters; Norway (USD 13.4 Billion, 10.0%), China (USD 11.0 Billion, 8.2%), India (USD 6.7 Billion, 5.0%) Vietnam (USD 6.3 Billion, 4.7%), and Canada (USD 6.3 Billion, 4.7%).

Kenya's supply for fish, crustaceans, aquatic invertebrates and molluscs to the world has been growing at an annual average of 14.9% between 2017 and 2021. However, the supply of declined by 26.9% between 2020 and 2021. Kenya's total exports in 2021 were valued at USD 32.4 million; representing 0.005% of the total export to the world ranking Kenya as the 108th lead exporter in the world. The top 5 export trade partners for Kenya in 2021 were Italy (6.1 million, 18.7%), Hong Kong (USD 5.1 Million, 15.6%),

Spain (3.0 million, 9.1%), Netherlands (2.5 million, 7.6%) and Portugal (USD 1.9 Million, 5.9%).

Kenya's volume of exports of fish were estimated at 10,875.3 tons in 2021. The percentage contribution of aquaculture to nominal GDP in the year was 0.7% with a positive percentage change to the GDP of 3.7% from the previous year.

Kenya has 121 registered unions and societies for fisheries that have grown over time since 2017 to 2021 by 2.5% average growth.

The country is yet to attain the full potential in fishing at both inland and marine waters. Under the Exclusive Economic Zones, Kenya has a large exclusive fishing zone with the potential to produce 300,000 tonnes of fish annually estimated at about Sh75 billion. However, it is yet to optimally utilise the opportunity as currently she produces approximately 150,000 metric tons annually. This has given room for development in this sector to explore her fishing potential.

Among the stakeholders present were Government institutions, county Government, Fishermen associations, logistics shippers' associations, sector investors, financial institutions, Private sector, Beach Management Units, BMOs, Donor agencies among others.

To increase the quantity and value of the export from the diverse potentials in Kenya's Blue Economic spaces, Kenya has a unique opportunity to deepen utilization of attendant natural resources, conservation and management of diverse maritime zones.

The Agency continues to engage and strengthen dynamics of strategic cooperation between stakeholders – Public, Private and Donors to drive implementation of Blue Economy projects within our country. This will mainstream the Blue Economy agenda for Kenya and bear fruits for the growth in exports and inflows of investment.



Exports Agency to strengthen collaboration with European Union

By Mariam Maina MMaina@brand.ke



On Wednesday 19th April 2022, the Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency (KEPROBA) met the EU Trade Counsellors based in Kenya to enhance market linkages between Kenyan Exporters and the European Union counterparts and also discuss areas of collaboration for the mutual benefit for Kenya and European Union (EU) countries.

EU is a major economic partner and a leading Export Destination for Kenya. Despite being a leading export destination, the trade balance is in favor of the EU. Kenya's exports to the EU fluctuated through the period 2017-2021 from USD 1.5 billion in 2017 to USD 1.9 billion in 2021.

In 2021, Kenya's exports increased by USD 263.9 million from USD 1.6 million in 2020. The value of Kenya's exports to the EU stood at USD 1.9 billion in 2021. Kenya's imports also fluctuated through the period from USD 2.1 billion in 2017 to USD 2.6 billion in 2021.

Speaking at the breakfast meeting that brought together EU Trade representatives in Kenya, Principal Secretary, State Department for Trade Alfred K'Ombundo noted that the trade and investment relationship between Kenya and EU is very important.

"Kenya is working towards being a 21st century exporter. It is not just about how we export and trade, we need to provide leadership in terms of the green economy. We need to adhere to our international commitments especially in efficient energy resources use in our production processes. We want to have more products sold at premium terms in markets across the world," he said.

The PS revealed that the Government is keen on enhancing and improving commercial diplomacy abroad and is rethinking the export strategies that ensure SMES can reap from the export business just like the bigger export players.

Kenya currently enjoys market access to EU through the Economic Partnership Agreement (EAC-EU) which allows it to export duty-free and quota-free. However, the EPA is yet to be fully enforced as Kenya is the only country that has ratified it and the other EAC members are yet to ratify it. The major challenges hindering our export growth to the EU despite having an EPA in place are the stringent compliance



requirements with several regulations and standards designed to ensure that the products meet the required quality and safety standards. Europe, demands high standards of products that can be traced to the source.

“As an Agency mandated to promote the export of Kenyan goods and services, we remain committed to championing market linkages between the Kenyan Business community and their EU counterparts. We will hold more of such meetings to boost collaborations and minimize barriers hindering trade between Kenya and EU,” noted KEPROBA’s Ag. CEO Floice Mukabana.

Kenya’s key export products to the EU in 2021 were Cut flowers and flower buds (USD 660.7 million), Tea (USD 174 million), Leguminous vegetables (USD 171.3 million), Dates, figs, pineapples, avocados, guavas, mangoes fresh or dried (USD 158.8 million), and Coffee (USD 106.5 million).

The breakfast meeting comes at the wake of a recent Kenya-EU business forum which took place in February spearheaded by H.E. President William Ruto with the aim of fostering trade relations.

The EU Trade Counsellor Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Kenya, Mr. Martijin Boelen, laid emphasis on the fight against climate change and issue of sustainability.

“There is a huge market in the EU waiting for Kenyan products but as you trade with us, you need to ensure that everything you produce is sustainable. We have strict EU regulations that must be adhered to and consumers preference is important. You will find that our consumers are more sustainability focused,” said Mr. Martijin Boelen.

KEPROBA has been keen on expanding market access for Kenya’s exports. The Agency has set up a robust e-portal platform that will link Kenyan exporters to buyers from across the world. The fully integrated and interactive portal will provide exporters, buyers and sellers an opportunity to showcase and trade their products globally. It will also be a reservoir of information for various stakeholders to influence trade, investments and positive nation brand.

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The platform is part of the Agency’s strategy to leverage on information technology in promotion of exports and marketing the country brand. The Agency seeks to adopt non-traditional means in export and country marketing away from physical exhibition even beyond COVID -19 era.

Tree Planting To Support Government’s “Mission15b #Jazamiti Initiative

By Irene Ouko (Irenev@brand.ke)

On Friday, 28th April 2023, the Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency participated in a tree planting exercise in Murang’a County where 700 tree seedlings were planted along Mathioya River line and a further 300 avocado tree seedlings donated to tea farmers in the area.



The exercise which was carried out in partnership with Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA), KTDA Foundation and Kiru Tea Factory is geared towards supporting the Government’s Land Restoration Acceleration Programme to increase Kenya’s forest cover to 30pc by 2032 as well as creating sustainable agriculture especially in the tea sector as it’s a key sector in Kenya’s economy that contributes significantly to the gross domestic product, foreign exchange, and the direct and indirect employment of millions of people.

Representing the Agency’s Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Mariam Maina, Manager, Corporate Communications assured the community of the Agency’s continued support in ensuring environmental conservation and sustainable agricultural practices for enhanced economic growth. She further appealed to the community to maintain the trees planted to reap the desired benefits.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Samuel Mbwiki, the Kiru Tea Factory Manager, promised to plant 5 million trees in the area by the end of 2023. He urged farmers to take it upon themselves to plant trees in their farms to achieve the set target.

"Factories are major consumers of wood and therefore there's need for us to plant and grow trees to replenish the firewood used and in turn conserve the environment," said Mr. Mbwika

Tree planting remains a high priority Government Driven Initiative with the launch of the "National Tree Growing and Restoration Campaign" dubbed as "Mission15B#JazaMiti" "by H.E President Dr. William Ruto. The campaign, which was launched in December last year, aims at increasing the country's tree cover to 30 percent by 2032.

This will involve growing of five billion trees in the next five years and 15 billion trees over the next 10 years. To achieve this, every individual is urged to grow a minimum of 300 trees in 10 years. This translates to 30 trees a year.

The Government will recognize outstanding Kenyans, companies and organizations that plant and grow trees by issuance of certificates of Green Conduct. This will be after three years of the commencement of the campaign.



KEPROBA carries out export awareness outreach programme in Kakamega county

By Stephanie Mutuku

The Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency is engaging Kenyan exporters in various counties as part of the Export Awareness Outreach Programme. Through the Outreach programme, the Agency is reaching out to SMEs to assess their export readiness and support them in building their export capacity. Counties mapped out for the programme include: Makueni, Kakamega, Uasin Gishu, Nyamira and Garissa County

As part of the program, the Agency reaches out to SMEs to appreciate the production, handling, packaging and quality control processes employed by the firm. This is with the aim of identifying and eventually addressing gaps and challenges being faced in the production process. The program also looks at the markets that the SMEs serve and whether the product has potential to expand into regional and international markets. The overall objective of the exercise is to identify enterprises with export ready products and support them through KEPROBA's capacity building and market linkage programs to grow their production capacity and access international markets.

The Agency kicked off this year's programme in Kakamega County. While engaging the Kakamega County government, discussions centered around realizing the export potential of the region. Kakamega County's Industrialization Director, Mr. Stephen Musee, pointed out that the county is working on increasing its capacity for enterprises to realize industrialization in the region.

Further to this, Hon. Shakir Adan the Chief Officer of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and investment in the county said, "Kakamega County is working on increasing its processing and manufacturing capacity by setting up industrial parks and special economic zones. Through working with the Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency we hope to be able to realize the county's export potential."

The Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency engaged enterprises in the region in various sectors including: marine, dairy and dairy products, tea, nuts and nut products, honey and more. One of the enterprises included Kakabee Apiaries, Center For Creative Apiculture and Value Addition. Aside from producing and packaging honey, Kakabee Apiaries offers bio-enterprise beekeeping and value addition training

services for groups and individuals in Kenya. The enterprise also produces bee products candles, propolis and lip balms from bees wax from modern apiaries they have set up in the region. The Agency identified branding interventions as a way of improving the product offerings from the enterprise to be able to expand their market base.

In addition, firms like Western Fish Flies a manufacturer and exporter of fish flies and Balibayo Women's group a manufacturer of peanut butter noted the need for capacity building in order to further grow their business and expand markets.

Enterprises engaged with during the outreach programme noted that the Agency's visits to their firms have made them aware of various interventions they can utilize in their business. Speaking during an engagement with the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce Kakamega Chapter, it emerged that the business community in the region is in need of capacity building initiatives, and it is an area that has been prioritized by the Organization. The Agency's visit was timely as some of the programmes run by the Agency will go a long way in empowering businesses in reaching the international market.

The Export Awareness Outreach Program not only publicizes KEPROBA's proposed programs but also offers guidance for export development as the Agency seeks to achieve the target of 6.5% annual growth of exports. The Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency remains committed to ensuring its services are equally accessible by all customers in the country.



KEPROBA Director, Strategy, Planning and Quality Assurance Ms. Celestine Rono meeting with Bukutar Agricultural College Milk Plant Manager in Kakamega County



Kakabee Managing Director, Kakamega County Trade Offices and KEPROBA team at the Kakabee Apiaries in Kakamega County



Chief Officer, Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism Hon. Shakir Adan engaging with KEPROBA Trade Advisory Services Principal Officer Mr. Kelvin Nkai at the Kakamega County Offices.



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